Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE WAR ON THE HOME FRONT

By Arthur Horner

NOVEMBER 1939 SIXPENCE

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

From 1917 to 1939—The War Behind the War—Successes for World Socialism—Demands to "Switch" the War—"The Craziest of Wars"—"International Public Enemy No. 1"—The Anti-Soviet Campaign on the Left—The Question of the Working-class Revolution in Germany—The Key Question for Europe—Back to Versailles?—"What are We Fighting For?"—The War Aims Controversy—Chamberlain's Real War Aims—Rising Movement Against the War—The Peace Question—The Future

There are no grounds for assuming that the war can provide a real way out. On the contrary, it must confuse the situation still more. More than that, it will certainly unleash revolution and put in question the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries, as was the case in the course of the first imperialist war. And if, notwithstanding the experience of the first imperialist war, the bourgeois politicians clutch at war as a drowning man clutches at a straw, it shows that they have become utterly confused, have reached an impasse and are ready to rush headlong over into the abyss (Stalin, speech to the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1934).

ON this twenty-second anniversary of the victory of the Socialist Revolution in Russia there is no need of formal reminders to the world of that event. Once again we are plunged in war. Once again the capitalist order is demonstrating its criminal bloodstained bankruptcy. Once again

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the international working class is struggling against the chloroform of war illusions and against the fetters of an opportunist leadership which has allied itself with the capitalist warmakers. Once again the conditions are gathering such as gave rise to the first victory of the world socialist revolution. The first wave of wars and revolutions ended with socialism victorious in one-sixth of the world. It is for us to see that the second wave which is now breaking over the heads of mankind and sweeping up the débris of a whole historical period in its stormy course shall end with the victory of socialism in the decisive countries of the world. This is the task of the working-class movement in the present war. Despite all the entrenchments of reaction, the conditions in this second wave are infinitely more favourable than in the first. The war of 1939 differs from the war of 1914 above all in that it takes place in the period of the already developing world socialist revolution. The working-class movement has been through a whole generation of political experience. The communist movements exist in all countries ; millions of workers follow the banner of the Communist International, not after the end, but from the outset of the war. The colonial revolutions are far more powerfully advanced. Above all, the first Socialist State now exists as the strongest World Power, able from the outset to influence the world situation in the interests of the international working class. This new factor is already transforming the development and the relation of forces in the present war even within the first few weeks since its outbreak. Behind the forms of the present war the real issues are revealing themselves ever more sharply—the issues of capitalism and socialism, of the struggle between the monopoly capitalist rulers and the working class within each country, of the gathering conflict between the leaders of world imperialism and the Soviet Union, of the future of the socialist revolution in Central Europe. As these issues reveal themselves with increasing sharpness behind the threadbare slogans of the war-makers, there spreads within the working-class movement the awakening to the true character of the present war and to the true interests of the working class.

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THE real origin of the present war was the antagonism of British imperialism to the Soviet Union. It was on the basis of this antagonism that German imperialism was able to climb back to power after the crushing blow of Versailles. It was because of this antagonism that the Nazi dictatorship of German finance-capital was able to enlist the active support of its rival, British finance-capital, for its equipment, arming and expansion over six years. It was because of this antagonism that the British ruling class refused the Peace Front which they knew could have checked Nazi aggression, but which they also knew would have defeated the aim of war on the Soviet Union. It was because of this antagonism that Chamberlain reversed his policy to Hitler and determined on war against Hitler after Hitler had abandoned his anti-Soviet aims and signed the Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union. The war against " Hitlerism " (the new term especially coined, not to express, but to conceal the real aims of the present war) is thus neither war against the fascist system in Germany nor against fascist aggression. Neither of these caused the slightest qualms to the British ruling class for these six years, so long as they hoped that their point would be directed against the Soviet Union. Neither the fascism nor the fascist aggression of Mussolini cause the slightest qualms to the British ruling class, who are actively engaged in courting Mussolini with every compliment, and who raise no question of the restoration of Albania (which was over-run after Czechoslovakia) any more than of Abyssinia, when they speak so freely of the " restoration " of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The war against " Hitlerism " is war against the orientation of Nazi Germany to peace with the Soviet Union. *Thus this war, so far from being anti-fascist war, is objectively the preliminary stage for anti-Soviet war.* This is what makes so dangerous the illusions of those who support this war in a roseate mist of anti-fascist sentiments which have nothing to do with the aims of the ruling class. The anti-democratic anti-socialist anti-Soviet aims of Chamberlain and the British reactionaries have not been suddenly reversed with the present war. On the contrary, they are being carried forward

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through the present war. The fight against Chamberlain's policy is necessarily a fight against this war.

THE most significant feature of the present world situation since the outbreak of war is that the Soviet Union, which is outside the war, more and more visibly occupies the centre of world politics and is by its active initiative transforming the situation. The active initiative of the Soviet Union has dealt successive blows alike to the aims of Chamberlain and to the aims of German fascism. The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact simultaneously spiked the aims of Chamberlain of promoting war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and signalised the defeat of all the Nazi aims of expansion at the expense of the Soviet Union, no less than the collapse of all the ideology of *Mein Kampf* built upon that basis. The action of the Red Army on September 17 in occupying the territories previously seized by Polish aggression simultaneously spiked Chamberlain's second plan of using Poland as the decoy, deliberately left without defence, to draw on the Nazi hordes to the borders of the Soviet Union, and robbed Nazi Germany of the main hoped-for fruits of its victory by checking its expansion to the South East. The Treaties of the Soviet Union with the Baltic States and the establishment of naval and air bases blew up all the carefully-laid plans alike of British imperialism and of the Nazis in that region for utilising it for anti-Soviet war and dealt a smashing blow to the former Nazi influence in those countries. The Soviet-German Agreement of September 29 established the Soviet frontiers on an unassailable basis in relation to the principles of national self-determination; while the call for peace to Western Europe placed squarely on the shoulders of British imperialism the responsibility for continuing the war. A brilliant record of successes for one month of war ; and a record achieved, while maintaining the one hundred and seventy millions of the Soviet Union at peace, and fighting for peace for all the peoples of the world. In the further development it is no less noticeable that the main activities of British imperialism, while maintaining a defensive standstill in the West, have been especially con-

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centrated on Finland and on Turkey. The significance of these two main lines of concentration is obvious.

IN the face of the advancing strength of the Soviet Union, and the relative weakening of German fascism, the most influential sections of British imperialism openly and with a loud voice demand to " switch " the war, that is, to transform the war into war against the Soviet Union. They demand that Germany speedily abandon its present alignment in order to enter into the anti-Soviet combination, and they swear that their interests are really identical. There is still a division of two schools of thought in this connection. One school demands the speediest possible settlement with German reaction, even possibly with Hitler, in order to advance to the aim of anti-Soviet war. The other school insists on the necessity of first inflicting a decisive military defeat on Germany in order to compel its submission, and for this purpose places in the forefront during this stage the necessity of reaching a basis of close relations with the Soviet Union. But the ultimate aim of both schools is identical. There is also much common ground between them in practice. Both schools recognise the necessity of maintaining a most conciliatory mask to the Soviet Union in the present stage, swallowing as best they can their real fury and venom ; both recognise the necessity of first winning some military success against Nazi Germany before they can have any hope of enforcing a change in policy ; both, therefore, present a rigid front against any immediate peace proposals. But the most influential sections of British finance-capital, the Munichite sections, are open in the expression of their basic anti-Soviet aims.

TYPICAL is the expression of Lord Kemsley's organ, the *Daily Sketch*, whose owner, Lord Kemsley, paid a visit to Hitler just before the war :

> Hitler, that master of abuse and vituperation, is easily enough disposed of by himself ; but enveloped as he now is by a vast smokescreen of Bolshevism rising with increasing volume, he becomes more and more indistinguishable as an individual enemy and a personal factor in the craziest of wars.

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> However, the imperialism of Stalin seems to us just as dangerous as does the Nazism of Hitler, and the blend of the two doctrines threatens to engulf Europe in complete and utter ruin.

After a polemic against the " school of thought which believes in trying to pacify and satisfy Russia, the better and quicker to defeat Germany," the editorial continues :

> Let us clear our minds of cant. Hitler's first steps in this war were excused by him on the grounds of anti-Communism. Our first steps in the conflict were similarly affected by the same dictates. Both Britain and Germany are now confronted with a paralysis of their respective national efforts and ideals by an approaching political and irreligious force which is certain to grow and gather force as it comes rolling Westward. The sooner both countries recognise this, brushing Hitler aside as a dangerous communistic lunatic who has set fire to his own Reichstag, the better for civilisation (*Daily Sketch*, October 12, 1939).

SIMILARLY Commander King-Hall, writing in the *Sunday Pictorial* on October 1, suggested that the removal of Hitler might be the first step to organising Germany as a partner in an anti-Soviet combination :

> The German people would be very suitable collaborators with France and Great Britain in order to insist on a just settlement in Europe, if the Kremlin then became International Public Enemy No. 1.

The main publicist of the Munichites, " Scrutator," wrote :

> The prospect of a decline in the fortunes of the German people and of the expansion of Russia's influence has no attraction for the vast majority of English people.
>
> If any way offered by which we could make peace with what is admirable in German character and achievement . . . . we in this country would eagerly welcome it (*Sunday Times*, October 1, 1939).

The *Daily Mail* Diplomatic Correspondent, remarking that in the wake of the Soviet troops in Poland the peasants were in power and the landlords dispossessed, stated :

> This is a danger which all Europe must face. Hitler must face it, like anybody else (*Daily Mail*, October 2, 1939).

NOR are the voices of the centre and the left missing in the campaign. The Liberal and Labour press has taken on the main task of purveying anti-Soviet venom,

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endeavouring by every device to identify Communism and Fascism with the aid of the old familiar slogan of " totalitarian dictatorship " (the sleight-of-hand trick for concealing the class struggle). The normally moderate liberal City organ, the *Economist*, comes out with the most bellicose demand for war on both :

> All the carefully elaborated distinctions that have been drawn between Hitler's system and Stalin's system have now been blown to the winds . . . . The world will not be safe for decent men to devote their efforts to cleanly ends, so long as any form of totalitarian dictatorship, armed against criticism and opposition exists in any one of the Great Powers (*Economist*, September 23, 1939).

H. N. Brailsford, contemplating the possibility of " Russia's active belligerency," reaches the shrewd conclusion that success in anti-Soviet war will require some other than Conservative leadership :

> We may have to revise all the doctrines with which we entered this war. If we mean to conduct it as champions of a new civilisation against the cynical brutality of Berlin and Moscow, we cannot hope for success under Conservative leadership (H. N. Brailsford, in *Reynolds News*, October 1, 1939).

THE fear of the victory of the working-class revolution in Germany, and of the failure of Hitler as a brake against it, comes more and more into the open in British ruling class expression. The German-Soviet Pact is seen as the prelude to such a transformation and to the eventual union of a socialist Germany with the socialist Soviet Union. The *Times* discusses the prospect if " Germany goes Bolshevist " :

> Herein would seem to lie the greatest danger to the Western Powers, and indeed to the whole of Europe. The *bloc* between Soviet Russia and a Nazi Germany, which is likely to represent a very uncertain alliance, seems less to be feared than a *bloc* between a Soviet Russia and a Soviet Germany, which would follow a Bolshevist revolution in the latter country. Nazi Germany is in many respects ripe for Bolshevism, and the conditions of the war, coupled with the close association with the Soviet Union, which is now imminent, will make it more so. Recent information from well-informed circles in Berlin show that the possibility of such a revolution is seriously entertained (*Times*, September 30, 1939).

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Thus the picture is seen of a fortress of socialism, extending from the Rhine to Vladivostok, against which Western imperialism would batter in vain. The old nightmare, which was close and familiar during the days of Versailles, haunts the British and French reactionaries once again.

THE question of the German revolution has indeed been the pivotal question and the recurrent thread through all these twenty years of European politics. The victory of the socialist revolution in Germany is decisive for the victory of socialism in Europe ; Germany means all Central Europe ; and France would not be likely to stay long behind (the suppression of the French Communist Party has shown the keen consciousness of this). All the vindictiveness of Versailles was above all actuated, not only by imperialist rivalry, but by the aim to hold in shackles the German people, where the Soldiers' and Workers'. Councils had had power in their hands and only Social Democracy had defeated socialism. All the crazy pattern of new States was devised, not out of consideration for the principles of nationality, but in order, as was freely stated at the time, to establish a system of bastions against the socialist revolution. The same considerations turned Versailles upside down ; the alternative method of Locarno was attempted with Stresemann, the statesman who declared his Government the "last Government" of a capitalist Germany. The method of emergency dictatorship was tried ; the only outcome was that Communism grew six million strong, while the Nazis were beginning to go down. By this time nine out of ten of the German people were voting for parties which nominally proclaimed the aim of socialism ; no open capitalist part could get any support.

THEN the final bloody Nazi dictatorship was attempted for the complete suppression of every trace of the working-class movement. With joy the British bankers concluded that the job had at last been done, and that Communism was finished ; Hitler became their idol and their god. But the dialectical progress has had its revenge on them. The decaying Nazi régime in desperation has had to turn to the Soviet Union; through the cracks of the weakening Nazi régime appear

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already the outlines of the gathering working-class revolution. Once again the British and French bankers have had to order their troops on the march, to re-establish the old Versailles system. The same puppet Governments are maintained ready in London and Paris to set up the same puppet States as bulwarks against socialism. The monarchical ragbag is sorted out to find some suitable reactionary ruler or rulers for Germany or for the projected new divisions of Central Europe.

AS these issues come into the open, so the real war aims of Chamberlain inevitably begin to show through. On every side the question is asked with growing insistence: What are the war aims of the Government? The spread of this question is the first sign of incipient disillusionment with the war. The more the Government refuses to answer it, the more the doubt grows. And of course the Government refuses to answer save with the usual vague rhetorical flourishes which can mean anything or nothing and drive the naïve serious enquirer crazy. In an imperialist war no other course is possible. In a democratic people's war there is no difficulty in stating the war aims. The Spanish Democratic Government under Negrin had no difficulty in defining its war aims in a series of precise, concrete points, because that was what the people were fighting for, and everybody knew it. But in an imperialist war, which is based on the deception of the people, the war aims cannot be stated save in the conventional obscurity of poetical, metaphorical idealist balderdash.

IN the dreary and unreal "war aims" controversy of the experts the experience of the first imperialist war is being repeated with monotonous fidelity; and anyone with a moderate sense of smell should be able to recognise the familiar sniff of an imperialist war from this sign alone, even if there were no other. As H. G. Wells, who was a victim last time, recalls:

> In many respects it recalls the War Aims controversy of 1917-18, when the Crewe House organisation did its unsuccessful best to extract from the Foreign Office a precise statement of what the country was fighting for. No such statement was

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> ever produced, and the Great War came to a ragged end in mutual accusations of broken promises and double-dealing (H. G. Wells, letter in the *Times*, September 26, 1939).

Wells at any rate (let us give credit where credit is due, even though he has exhausted a lifetime in learning the first lesson, to see through the imperialist humbug, and has not yet succeeded to begin the second lesson, how to fight it, as his random remarks on Communism show) has had enough and does not want any more: "Once bit, twice shy. I am not going to be a stalking horse for the British Foreign Office again" (Wells, in the *New Statesman and Nation*, October 28, 1939). But there are plenty more. There are platoons and platoons of professors and philosophers and left intellectuals and Labour luminaries who love to flatter their self-importance during a war, and to console themselves for the sordid realities of an imperialist war, by constructing the most elaborate charts and structures of imaginary idealist "war aims," and then in the name of these supporting the imperialist war which is in fact being fought for entirely different purposes. When the war is over, they will complete the comedy in the time-honoured fashion by complaining how "the noble ideals with which we entered the war have been betrayed."

THE real aims of Chamberlain and his colleagues are sufficiently clear from their whole policy, record and outlook, no less than from the character of the war. These aims have nothing to do with democracy or anti-fascism; anyone who after the Spanish experience can have any illusions on this score is only fit for an asylum. The whole outlook of the Chamberlains, Hoares, Halifaxes and Churchills is actuated by fear and hatred of democracy, socialism and the working class. They want to make Europe safe for plutocracy. They want to weaken Germany, not merely as an imperialist rival, but above all as a potential centre of socialism. For this purpose they seek to establish a suitable reactionary régime, which will be obedient to them, in Germany. Whether they carve up Germany for the purpose, seek to establish a new Holy Roman Empire in Central Europe, or prefer a centralised vassal reactionary Germany, is still a matter of

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controversy and dependent on circumstances. They seek, if circumstances are favourable, to establish puppet Governments of their tools in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, who will act as brakes against socialism. They seek to build up a combination of States in Central and Western Europe (for this purpose the ideology of "Federal Union" is very useful to them and given high patronage) under the domination of British-French finance to act against the Soviet Union. The final aim is war on the Soviet Union and the destruction of Socialism. For these high aims the millions of British and French workers are asked to give their lives.

AS the suspicion of these aims spreads, so the awakening is spreading against the war. The war of 1939 is revealing its characteristic difference from that of 1914, in this respect also, that the disillusionment and awakening against the war is beginning to spread widely already within the first few weeks of its outbreak. The declarations at all local labour and trade union conferences, wherever these are being held, wherever there is opportunity of representative expression, show that the movement against the war is already rising and has already an important following in the active working-class movement and among all sections of the population. This gathering movement against the war is finding its first expression in the growth of the demand for peace, for an immediate ending of the war and the calling of a Peace Conference. The call of the Soviet Union for peace has enormously stimulated this. In the conditions of the relative lull of warlike operations (a lull which may be very rapidly broken) the demand for peace has forced itself to the forefront of political discussion. The demand takes on something of the character of a prolongation of the fight to prevent the war —in this case to prevent the war developing to full-scale war with the wholesale destruction that this will bring.

THIS demand for peace, which unites many mixed elements, is the natural expression of the first stage of mass awakening and of the rising movement against the war. So long as the possibility exists to prevent the present war developing into full-scale war, to check it before it has fully

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begun, every endeavour needs to be directed to take advantage of this possibility. The demand for the immediate ending of the war correctly becomes the broadest slogan of the present stage of the fight. But it is necessary to be on guard against peace illusions. The British Government, which holds the effective power of decision, has in practice already rejected peace. New events, new developments on the front or new developments within Germany, may modify the situation. But at present the prospects point to the logic of imperialist war developing to prolonged and deepening war. Such a course can only be checked by powerful mass struggle of a character which would transform the whole political relation of forces. To speak of peace without facing the necessity of such mass struggle would be to spread dangerous illusions.

THE present situation holds, as we know and must recognise, the possibility and the certainty of many sharp turns and changes. Through them all, and through whatever forms they may take, we have to be clearly aware that the struggle will undoubtedly deepen in intensity, in the scale of the issues and in the character of the methods employed. The present awakening is still only just beginning. The organised working-class movement is still as a whole tied and bound by the policy of collaboration with the War Government and with the employers. If these fetters are not broken, the menace of development to fascism in this country, to the destruction of the independence of the working-class movement, becomes a serious one. We need to do all in our power to hasten the process of awakening, to fight for the independence and militancy of the working-class movement, and to develop the struggle in the present initial limited forms, in order to accelerate and strengthen the readiness for the further tests that are in front.

R. P. D.

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The War on the Home Front

BY ARTHUR HORNER

WHEN THESE LINES are read we will have been in a state of war for two months; and whatever may be said about the stalemate in the war of blood and iron there can be little doubt of the bitter and painful reality of the war that has been, and is being, waged without respite—the war on the home front. Those of us who happen to occupy positions of responsibility in the trade union movement have a special concern in this matter. None are in a better position to appreciate the devastation that has been wrought, in so short a space of time, in the lives of millions. I feel disposed to say that if anyone wants to know whether this is a capitalist war or not then he need look no further than his own doorstep. All around us we have the wreckage and ruin caused by a general attack on the living standards and conditions of the working class—and indeed the whole people—that has been quite without precedent.

It has all happened so quickly, and on so vast a scale, that I doubt whether the full extent of this real war against the people is generally realised. Everyone knows what has happened to them, or to those with whom they are in contact, but the picture as a whole may be dim precisely because of the sharpness of the immediate detail. So I venture to set down here some of the main facts that have emerged during these two stormy months. I do so with a minimum of argument, for it seems to me that, once our people have fully realised the whole significance of what is going on, then we shall be a big step nearer to the action that is necessary.

Cost of Living Rises 25 per cent

Let us take first that matter of most general concern—the cost of living. Official figures issued by the Ministry of Labour show that the cost of living has risen on an average by 6 per cent. Individual commodities show much higher increases. Sugar, one of the most widely consumed foods, has increased in price by 47 per cent.; fish by 29 per cent.; streaky bacon by 10 per cent.; fresh butter by 12 per cent.; salt butter by 19 per cent.; fresh eggs by 19 per cent.; and clothing by 7 per cent. Yet these official figures certainly under-estimate the extent of the increase. We know that they are calculated on an out-of-date basis which has long been criticised in our movement; and evidence is

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already to hand suggesting that the actual increase is now around 25 per cent. This is the conclusion officially reached by the Barnsley Public Assistance Committee, on the basis of a comparison of actual family budgets up to October 9.

But, it may be said, we are on the eve of rationing and the prices of most staple foods are already controlled. Yes, but how is this done? By the Ministry of Food in consultation with advisory committees of the trades concerned. The character of these committees is shown by the fact that the chairman of the advisory committee on cereals, for example, is J. V. Rank, chairman of the millionaire Rank's flour combine. The prices are fixed therefore at a level which the combines regard as " appropriate." Against these prices there is no machinery of appeal. The Food Council, which was the only formal representative of consumers before the war, and did in fact by its reports and investigations give some publicity to excessive monopoly prices, has now been disbanded, and its functions taken over by the Ministry of Food.

The local food committees (and local anti-profiteering committees now to be set up) have no control at all over these prices. Originally, power to enforce the maximum prices by prosecution was conferred on these local committees. But now even that power has been taken away. The committees are intended to be democratic merely in appearance, and the Government apparently hopes that they will occupy the attention of the local working class movement in a hue and cry after the small shopkeeper for " profiteering " in pennies, while the millions of monopoly capitalism mount up.

The General Attack in Industry

While prices have thus sharply risen, far from there being any corresponding increases in wages, the tendency in many industries has been for wages to be reduced, for mass dismissals and short time to operate. Simultaneously an immense number of people—evacuated wives and families and the wives and families of men in the armed forces—have been reduced at one blow to living on allowances which are gravely inadequate.

Unemployment rose by 100,000 in the first week of war, and has certainly risen further since. It was most severe in the clothing trades (increase of 30,000 over August figures); distributive trade (18,400); hotels and entertainments (44,000); printing (9,000); furniture and textiles (6,800). There was a severe temporary increase in fishing (11,000) and also in the motor and cycle section of the engineering industry (6,000). Thousands were dismissed without any notice at all. The problem is far more severe, and seems likely to last much longer, than in 1914. Here is an expert comment—

> Air raid fears and air raid precautions have heaped up a novel volume of worklessness. City shops have cast off thousands of employees. City offices have done the same, or gone off to other towns with shortened

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> staffs. The entertainments industry, now of a massive size in terms of workers, has come almost to a halt. On the other hand, there is no call yet for a rush of recruits to the forces . . . . and even the defence and armament trades, since they have been working at pressure for many months already, are not yet making the greedy demand for hands they made twenty-five years ago. In short, there is a very grave short-term problem of dislocation. (*Economist*, September 16, 1939.)

In certain industries—printing, cabs—short-time is being worked as a measure, supposedly temporary, but likely to last " for the duration." Note also that this unemployment increase is severe in relatively well-paid trades (e.g., printing) where employment is ordinarily very steady. It affects not only the workers, but also small business men—in particular shopkeepers, garage owners and the like, especially in London—and salaried and professional workers. The " black-coated " unemployment is as severe as it is tragic. On the one hand, in some industries, it is likely to be but temporary (e.g., in engineering) but, on the other hand, in industries like building, where there was a temporary rush for workers on urgent A.R.P. jobs, a severe decline in the near future is to be expected. A " labour shortage " is not likely to develop just yet, and this being so a favourable situation is created for the employers and the Government to go ahead with their offensive against existing standards.

It is true that, in some cases, dismissed workers have found employment in A.R.P. jobs at £3 a week. But it is equally true that it is not uncommon—although it is against Home Office advice—for dismissed workers to be re-engaged in their own trades—where, as builders, electricians, lorry drivers or mechanics, they had previously been earning £4 to £5 a week—on A.R.P. contracts at £3 a week.

Again, in many cases, employers have taken advantage of heavy unemployment to cut wages (e.g., musicians, shop assistants, cold storage men). An example of refined technique in this connection is the letter sent by John Lewis and Co., the Department Store, to their staffs, intimating that 300 are being dismissed and expressing the hope that " all who possibly can will forgo for the present at least one quarter of their present drawings " in order to make it possible to " avoid dismissals." It may be noted that Lewis's wages are already below the agreed Union rate. (*Reynolds News*, October 1, 1939.)

In the busy branches of industry—the arms factories, factories on A.R.P. contracts, etc.—greatly increased overtime is being worked. The London organiser of the A.U.B.T.W. has revealed that members of his union employed on Government contracts have been informed that overtime permits are no longer necessary, while the " economy " urge to local authorities has further increased the strain on A.R.P. workers. In the engineering industry in particular, overtime up to the full limit allowed by the Factory Acts is being worked even by women and young workers.

On top of this, the Government is empowered, under the Defence Regulations, to suspend provisions of the Factory and Mines Acts

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when this is necessary to speed up war production. In many factories the management has already spread the story that the Acts have already been suspended, and it is common knowledge that they are being largely disregarded, although this is quite illegal.

The conditions imposed by the "black-out" regulations also contribute to increased strain on the industrial worker. To-day it is often necessary to work by artificial light all day, while "black-out" arrangements frequently interfere with proper ventilation. For transport workers the strain of night driving is increased by the fact that schedules and running times (e.g., in London, Birmingham and Scotland) have not been changed, while no extra pay is given for this arduous work.

Cheap labour is already being introduced, especially in the engineering industry, making use of the A.E.U.'s agreement to a measure of dilution.

Legislation Against the Worker

Gravest of all in the dangers it foreshadows is new legislation like the Control of Employment Act. While the Act has been accepted by the General Council of the T.U.C., it is clear that in the hands of the Employer-Controllers it has most dangerous potentialities. It empowers the Minister of Labour to prevent any employers from engaging or re-engaging any worker. This means in effect that a worker can be made to work in the factory to which the Minister assigns him. He cannot freely leave it to obtain work where conditions are better; nor can he remain in his present employment if the Minister decides otherwise. The avowed object is to mobilise craftsmen on work of national importance. But the Act is not restricted to craftsmen.

The purpose of the Act was indeed summed up by Mr. George Hicks, when he said in the debate on the Bill in the House of Commons on September 14 last: "The object of the Bill is to prevent the general movement of labour, and . . . . to prevent enticement by higher wages. If not, what is it for? Eventually when you get down to it, that is the general purpose of the Bill." It can certainly operate as an Act to control increases in wages—that is, if the Unions allow it to be so operated. But, as was pointed out later in the same debate by Mr. S. P. Viant, "if there is any attempt, even by the leaders of the trade unions, to accept conditions that are irksome to the workers, the workers will do precisely as they did in 1915, 1916 and 1917—that is, form their own shop stewards movement and defy the conditions laid down by the trade unions."

Bearing all this in mind—to say nothing of the sinister powers conferred by the Defence Regulations*—one may well ask whether

*For example, Regulation 2B. makes it "an offence punishable with 14 years penal servitude to do any act with the intention of impairing the efficiency, or impeding the working, of any vessel, aircraft, vehicle, machinery, etc., used or intended to be used in H.M. Service or in the performance of essential work." While on the face of it this is to deal with sabotage, could it not be used against strikers? Other regulations contain provisions which may threaten the right of peaceful picketing and the freedom of shop stewards.

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1939 differs much from 1915, when *The Times* hailed the Treasury Agreement by which the engineers accepted dilution as "*breaking down the tyranny of trade unionism.*" Nor is there any need to underline the frame of mind of not a few among our rulers that was voiced recently by Mr. Hely-Hutchinson, M.P., in these words:

> While the spectacle of a comparatively small number of large fortunes being acquired in the course of the war is a public scandal, nevertheless it does not create anything like such a financial problem as the problem which is created by the increase of a very large number of small incomes. Therefore I suggest that it is mass economy, mass self-denial and mass sacrifice which is going to turn the scale of victory . . . . I hope that the Chancellor contemplates . . . . a bolder course; that he will dare to lay the taxes where the votes are. (*Hansard*, October 10, 1939.)

The Unemployed, "Allowances" and Social Services

Simultaneously with the attacks on the industrial working class, there have been attacks on that section of the working class which is least able to indulge in Mr. Hely-Hutchinson's hoped-for orgy of "sacrifice"—the unemployed. Since the war two important administrative changes in the treatment of the unemployed have been introduced. It is possible that more will follow. These are:

(1) Under the Unemployment Assistance Board (which handles also all war distress cases), the worker formerly had the right to appeal against the assessment of his allowance or the disallowance of his claim to a Court of Appeal which included a workers' representative. Under the new order the chairman of the Court of Appeal is left in sole charge and may, at his discretion, refuse to hear appeals. This makes the work of such organisations as the National Unemployed Workers Movement in the defence of the unemployed man far more difficult.

(2) The Insurance Officers have now been empowered to disallow claims without the sanction of the Court of Referees (which, of course, includes a workers' representative).

These changes are suggestive. They show that the Government is beginning to adopt its machinery for use against the working class, particularly necessary in connection with the Control of Employment Act. Any attack on the unemployed—especially an attack likely to affect those who have left their job owing to a dispute—is likely to prelude an attack on the employed.

I have already mentioned another factor which is responsible for still further reducing standards of life—the number of working class people (e.g., evacuated wives and families and the wives and families of men called to the colours), who have been reduced at one blow to living on "allowances."

The standard of the allowances allowed for these women and children is extremely low. Women in billets—who have to feed themselves—are allowed a maximum allowance of 10s. from the U.A.B. and even this is means-tested against the husband's wages. For evacuated school-children an allowance of 10s. 6d.—8s. 6d. is paid (wholly or partly recovered from their parents), but the allowance

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to soldier's wives for their children ranges from 5s. for the first to as little as 1s. for the fourth child. Even these miserable allowances—into which the Government is to "inquire"—are frequently in arrears.

The effect of this system is that the care of soldiers' wives and children is being thrown on to their relatives or neighbours, thus lowering the general standard of living. The Government's evacuation scheme, organised "on the cheap" by billeting in private houses to avoid the cost of building camps, has led to gravely increased overcrowding in villages and small towns. Hence the alarming trek of mothers and their children back to the towns. What is vitally important to note is the decline in standards of comfort and nutrition which is already taking place, with all its threat to health.

On top of this the social services have already been attacked. The Ministry of Health has indicated that municipal housing for slum-clearance and to relieve overcrowding is to be brought virtually to a stop, as is all "unnecessary" school building. Old age pensions are not to be raised and the proposed Committee of Enquiry on the matter has been abandoned. In answer to a question whether the rising cost of living did not make an increase necessary, Sir John Simon replied: "I cannot accept the statement that the cost of living is rising rapidly."(!)

The war has also been the excuse for suspending the raising of the school-leaving age, which was due to operate in September. In some areas the position is even worse, and that the exploitation of children of school age is beginning is shown by the following report:

> Ely Education Committee have decided that owing to the serious scarcity of labour they will raise no objection to boys and girls of 12 years of age being absent from elementary schools at any time from September 27 to November 17 to assist in agricultural work. (*Times Educational Supplement*, October 7, 1939.)

Bearing the Burden—and Enriching Monopoly

How the burden of paying for the war falls most heavily on the shoulders of those least able to bear it was shown clearly enough in the Budget. The new indirect taxation—mostly on sugar, beer and tobacco—means an extra 2s. per week on the expenses of the ordinary worker's family, making a present total of 13s. 4d. a week per family of four persons, in indirect taxation. So far as the increased income tax is concerned, it was pointed out more than once in Parliament that the percentage increase in tax paid is greatest for small incomes and diminishes as income increases. In particular, allowances for dependents have been reduced—a step which hits the small man hard and is trivial for the rich. As for the 60 per cent. Excess Profits Tax, it will operate only on profits exceeding those made at the peak of the boom—an all-time record for the volume of profits. Moreover, this tax, as Mr. Vyvyan Adams told the House, has its compensations for the rich, for, in Tennyson's words:

"*Though much is taken, much remains.*"

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Keen expectations of continued profit are reflected on the Stock Exchange. Here are a few random examples :

> Imperial Chemical Industries are likely to figure prominently in the rallying movement. As a manufacturer of high explosives the possibilities are self-evident.
>
> Smithfields and Argentine Meat ordinary shares have risen from 9s. to 13s. 6d. Apart from the rising trend of Argentine shares, based upon the reasonable belief that industry in the Republic should benefit from the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the recovery has been assisted by knowledge that the company received substantial " defence " orders from the British Government, and the likelihood that it may now be called on to deal with heavy " bully beef " demands from our fighting forces. (*Stock Exchange Gazette*, September 23, 1939.)

The same journal notes that " freight rates have doubled, and some owners are getting even better terms." (Cunard shares, for example, have doubled in value).

What has marked the opening stages of the war is that monopolies have been able to establish their complete economic control almost at one blow—a process which was far slower in the Great War. The speed with which every branch of Britain's economic life has been equipped with a controller, drawn from the board of directors of the principal monopoly concerned, is evidence of the far greater degree of power already possessed by these great concerns.

Now the Government has, under the Defence Regulations, power to do almost anything it likes with industry. These powers it is handing directly to the principal leaders of monopoly capital, whose price-associations have overnight been transformed (often without a change of address) into Government departments. The activities of these gentlemen have so far been mainly concerned with prices. But since they also represent the big employers, the workers and their trade unions have much to fear from their unbridled power in the future.

The Minister of Supply, for example, was immediately provided with a Munitions Advisory Council of industrialists concerned in arms manufacture, without the slightest pretence that these people were " impartial " on the question of arms profits.

They include :

> Lord Weir : Director General of Explosives; director of I.C.I.; Lloyd's Bank; Weir's, of Cathcart; International Nickel Co., of Canada; notorious on the Clydeside for his rôle in the " dilution " battles of the last war.
>
> Peter Bennett : Director General of Engineering Production; chairman of Joseph Lucas Ltd., Birmingham engineering firm; director of I.C.I.; President of Federation of British Industries; leader of F.B.I. trade delegation to Germany in 1939.
>
> Sir Andrew Duncan : Raw Material Controller. (See below).
>
> Ashley Cooper : Director of Bank of England; Hudson's Bay Co.; also of Compania Hispano-Americana de Electricidad, with big electrical interests in Spain and South America, a company whose other directors include the Duke of Alba and M. Van Zeeland.

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It is instructive too, to study the list of business men who have been appointed as "controllers" under the Ministry of Supply and are charged with the supervision of prices and the allocation of supplies of raw materials.

IRON AND STEEL: Sir Andrew Duncan. President of the British Iron and Steel Federation, the central organisation which has arranged the industry's own price-fixing scheme. Director of the Bank of England.

NON-FERROUS METALS (COPPER, LEAD AND ZINC): Captain Oliver Lyttelton. Managing director of the British Metal Corporation and 21 other companies, including London Tin Corporation, of which he is chairman; was, until recently, one of the two English directors of the German non-ferrous metal company Metallgesellschaft, and of the Norddeutsche Affinerie A.G.

ALUMINIUM: Hon. G. Cunliffe. Director of the British Aluminium Co. Ltd., which made a profit of £657,000 in 1938 and paid 12½ per cent. on ordinary shares.

PAPER: A. Ralph Reed. Chairman of Albert E. Reed and Co. (paper-makers) and director of London Paper Mills Co., Medway Corrugated Paper Co., Medway Paper Sacks Ltd.

AMMONIUM SULPHATE: F. C. O. Speyer. Director of I.C.I. (Fertilisers and Synthetic Products Ltd.), of International Nitrogen Association Ltd. and of Scottish Agricultural Industries Ltd. (subsidiary of I.C.I.)

OTHER FERTILISERS: Howard Cunningham. Director of Scottish Agricultural Industries.

ALCOHOL, MOLASSES AND SOLVENTS: A. V. Board. Chairman of British Industrial Solvents Ltd., director of Distillers Company (net profits £2½ millions in 1939) and of International Sugar and Alcohol Ltd. Other members of the Board family are connected with United Molasses Co., United Distilleries Ltd., Solvent Products and other companies carrying on a similar business.

The control policy is, of course, the policy of the monopolies in these industries. There have already been various striking examples of this fact. For example, in the iron and steel industry, the prices fixed by the control are the current prices ruling before the war. These prices were already some 30 per cent. above those of 1930. The level of profit of the iron and steel companies in 1938 was 87 per cent. above that of 1935. Yet in war-time, with an immensely increased turnover, prices are to be maintained which were only made possible in peace-time by a heavy tariff.

Again, in non-ferrous metals, the peace-time restriction schemes, designed to bolster up prices and profits by cutting down output, are being continued. As regards tin and rubber the British Government itself is a party to the schemes. Although the schemes allow member countries which are engaged in war to withdraw "it is learned that the British authorities are anxious to keep the schemes intact as long as possible." (*Economist*, September 16, 1939.)

The control has naturally immediate advantages for the particular groups which are able to secure the leading posts. Mr. Vyvyan Adams, Conservative M.P., declared in Parliament on October 10: "I am informed that the Metal Corporation has been taken over by the

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Government and has, in consequence, been able to put all its rivals out of business." Similar developments are taking place in many other trades. Especially is this so in the food trades, where many smaller companies have hitherto survived. Here war control is certain to be used by the dominant groups to develop their monopoly. Finally, the Government has appointed as its Adviser on Economic Co-ordination, Lord Stamp, Chairman of the L.M.S., Director of the Bank of England, Chairman of the Abbey Road Building Society, and former member of the Anglo-German Fellowship—supreme " ideologist " of Big Business.

Democracy in Cold Storage

On top of all this we find that democracy is being coolly shelved. Through the Emergency Powers Act the Government has armed itself with power to legislate without consulting Parliament. The main body of new law is being passed by orders and regulations issued from Government departments, in such volume and at such speed that they are rarely discussed by Parliament. The powers assumed by the Government, some of which may be delegated to the Regional Commissioners or to the police, include :

(1) Power to arrest suspects without charge, and keep them in prison without trial (i.e., suspension of right of *Habeas Corpus*).
(2) Power to ban meetings which might promote disaffection or hinder the successful conduct of the war.
(3) Power for the police to arrest and search without warrant.
(4) Power to ban publications for propaganda which might promote disaffection or hinder the successful conduct of the war.
(5) Power to arrest anyone for speaking or writing in a way calculated to influence public opinion in a way prejudicial to the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war.

In the sphere of local government the dangers are equally evident. No further local government elections are to be held. Local Authorities have been instructed to set up emergency committees to carry on A.R.P. and other urgent work, and in many cases seem to have been given the impression that councils were not to meet. In most areas they are in fact meeting, but their proceedings are not always fully democratic. In London at least ten borough councils are not meeting at all.

More serious is the threat to supersede or restrict the powers of Local Authorities in favour of the Regional Commissioners, who, like the Controllers and the rest of the new war executives, are mainly big business men. Already the functions of prosecuting for profiteering have been transferred from the local committees to these gentlemen and their staffs. They have likewise been provided with Regional Information Officers who will report to them on the state of public morale in their area. It is in the name of this " Regional Information " that the request to restaurant proprietors to report any " suspicious " conversations has been issued. The Commissioners are not elected, nor

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are they responsible to any elected assembly. They are Chamberlain's chosen Gauleiters who may at any time be called upon to exercise the full authority of the Government.

What Is To Be Done?

Scanning the picture that I have tried to outline in this article one conclusion stands out clearly. The attack on the working class has proceeded, and is proceeding, on all sectors of the front; what is the nature of our defensive action? The answer is paradoxical. In face of the enemy's attack the general staff of our movement has proclaimed, and is observing, a truce—both political and industrial. Industrially we have the joint advisory council set up, with Government approval, between the General Council of the T.U.C. and the employers' organisations; politically we have the "truce" that has been observed in by-elections and that it is proposed to make final by the Elections Bill.

The effect of this position has naturally been that resistance to the wide capitalist offensive has been disorganised. We have yet to arrive at concerted measures of defence—and attack—on the part of the working class and its movement. Nor can this problem be separated from the thinking out of our whole attitude to the war, since the very conception of a political and industrial truce of collaboration with the Government arises from the whole-hearted acceptance of the supposed anti-Fascist character of the war, and the reposing of general confidence in this, or some similar, Government to carry it through. On this I do not need to repeat here arguments that are developed in detail elsewhere in this issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY; but clearly, if the war is not a war against Fascism, if it is in fact an imperialist war, then the conception of a political and industrial truce falls to the ground, and the case for the re-assertion of the entire and active independence of the Labour movement is unanswerable.

It is not as if there were no signs of movement on the part of important sections of the working class and their unions. Already many are pressing for wage increases, a necessary demand in view of the rising cost of living. Some increases have already been conceded, notably to the miners, the cotton operatives (though not the full amount demanded), in the shipbuilding industry, certain branches of chemicals and in some agricultural areas. Other claims come from the engineers (who face the anxieties of dilution and have shown themselves determined, in several districts, to adhere to a militant policy) and from the railwaymen, whose 50s. minimum demand has been only partially conceded by a majority of the national tribunal, and even in this form rejected by the companies. It is obvious under the circumstances of to-day that wider and wider sections will inevitably be drawn into this movement for what is an absolutely necessary defence of living standards that were meagre enough even before the war.

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But what is needed is surely that this movement should be co-ordinated and directed with the aim of securing a general advance. We know of old how in critical times the working class may be in universal agitation, demands are put forward in many industries, strikes take place in different trades and localities, yet these movements remain essentially sporadic and isolated. Because there is no co-ordinating leadership, no planned direction, there is no general gain. To this problem and its solution our policy needs to be urgently directed; and that, I say again, means that we have to assert, and make real, the uncompromising independence of our mighty Labour movement.

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Strategic Aspects of the War—II

BY "STRATEGIST"*

ONE MONTH HAS elapsed since the first article dealing with the strategic aspects of the war was written. The situation in the East, the South East and the Baltic has completely changed. Once and for all the far-sighted policy of the Soviet Union and her mighty Red Army have stopped Fascist aggression towards the Ukraine, the Black Sea and the Baltic States. Hitler's plans aiming at the domination of Eastern Europe and the Balkans are destroyed. German Fascism has suffered its first great defeat.

Fifteen days of a ruthless lightning war were sufficient to break the semi-fascist Polish State into pieces. The ruling classes of Poland, the big landowners of Eastern and the industrialists of Western Poland, the Warsaw government of Fascist colonels bear the responsibility for the conditions under which the Polish people had to fight. They had completely neglected the defence of their country and never received, before or after the German aggression, any material help from their guarantors, the Chamberlain and Daladier governments. The Becks hoped—almost until the first bombs dropped on Warsaw—to join together with Hitler, Great Britain and France in the holy crusade of capitalism against the Socialist Soviet Union.

The badly equipped Polish army was unable to hold out against the full strength of the German armoured divisions and the overwhelming superiority of Germany's air force. Instead of adopting a defensive strategy based on the natural defence lines drawn by the Vistula and its tributaries, the Polish General Staff was still dreaming during the first days of the war, of an offensive operation against Stettin and Pomerania. But already in the third week of the war the resistance of the Polish army was broken and the majority of Poland's Government was in Rumanian territory. Only the garrison of Warsaw, reinforced by many thousands of freedom and independence loving Polish civilians, was defending the ruthlessly bombarded and shelled capital against the Fascist aggressor. The main German armoured forces, however, advanced quickly in the north east towards Lithuania and White Russia and still more menacingly in the south east against Rumania and the Ukraine.

*The writer of these strategic reviews, of which the first appeared in the LABOUR MONTHLY for October, is a former Staff Officer of the Army of the Spanish Republic.

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This was the situation when the Soviet Government decided to stop the German Fascist advance and to save the White Russian and Ukrainian population of Eastern Poland from war and oppression. Two Soviet armies entered Polish territory and advanced to a strategic demarcation line following approximately the upper San, the middle Bug and the Piliza in the North. Not only were the oppressed White Russians and Ukrainians in Eastern Poland liberated from Polish, and saved from German, oppression, but direct access to Rumania with its riches in oil and wheat, and to the Black Sea, was barred to Hitler. His Foreign Minister, Von Ribbentrop, had to accept in Moscow the new order in Eastern Europe.

There were, however, other danger spots in the East. The weak Baltic States with an active German Fascist minority might be overrun at any time by a German motorised army which would mean a serious menace to the Soviet Union's outlet to the Baltic. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania recognised the danger of their situation and, upon the invitation of the Soviet Union, have concluded mutual assistance pacts which give the U.S.S.R. the right to establish air and naval bases in these countries and to keep garrisons within them. These treaties describe mutual respect of the present state forms, and both parties are to abstain from intervening in the internal affairs of the respective countries. Vilna and the Lithuanian part of north eastern Poland, which was occupied in 1920 by an aggressive act of the Pilsudski Government, has been restored to Lithuania.

These arrangements are of extraordinary importance. Stable peace is being established in the hitherto unsecured Eastern Baltic and the Black Sea where the power of the largest and most modern army in the world will protect the peoples against aggression. Hitler has lost his control over the Baltic and his plans for the domination of the Black Sea are scotched. The rapidly increasing Red Fleet, together with the navies of the Baltic States, will not allow in their waters any acts of piracy from whatever quarter it may come.

Further, the strategic position of the Soviet Union has been considerably improved. The defence lines of Leningrad and White Russia have been advanced more than 300 miles to the West. The military control of the Estonian Islands of Oesel and Dagoe ends the danger of a blockade of the Gulf of Finland. An air attack on Leningrad will be almost impossible as the interceptor squadrons stationed in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will be able to stop the approach of enemy bombers. The possibility of using the Baltic States as bases for an attack against the U.S.S.R., for which purpose those states were created at the Versailles Conference in 1919, no longer exists.

Given the final touch of satisfactory arrangements with Finland, the Soviet Union will have established peace and stable relations in Eastern Europe; so all peoples there will be able to take in hand their economic and political problems. Hitler's bombers are no longer

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a menace for the many millions of men and women from Tallinn to Istanbul. Hitler has had to shelve his ambitions for *lebensraum* in the East, where Fascism will never triumph. The last few weeks have strengthened immensely the position of the Soviet Union, which has become the guarantor of Eastern Europe's peace. The bloodless victory of the Soviet Union over Hitler is a victory of the international working class and of all peace-loving and democratic forces of the world.

As Hitler's further advance to the East and the South East is blocked he now has two alternatives: either to seek a quick military decision in the West by crushing the Anglo-French imperialist bloc, in order to get rid of his rivals in the field of world imperialism, or to come to an agreement with British and French imperialism which will undoubtedly end in an anti-Soviet alliance and in a war of the big capitalist powers against the U.S.S.R.

What are the chances of a German military victory in the West? Certainly the man-power and the war material of the German forces on land, in the air and at sea are massive. Three hundred divisions, including twenty armoured or highly motorised divisions, and 10 cavalry divisions, 10,500 tanks, 9,000 aeroplanes and 75 submarines are a powerful concentration of military power. The overwhelming majority of the first line planes, between 5,000 and 6,000, will be used for offensive and defensive actions in the West. More than two-thirds of the tanks, especially the heavy and medium models, are at the disposal of the Western command. About 75 per cent. of the infantry divisions including almost all the armoured divisions are now concentrated on the different sectors of the Western front. The rest of the forces, however, must be kept in the East and in the different garrisons of the former Czechoslovak Republic as the troops of the S.S. and the increased Gestapo apparatus are not sufficient to guarantee the security of the Nazi administration in the Protectorate and in Poland. But still 225 divisions, 5,500 first line planes and 8,000 tanks of all sizes constitute a gigantic military machine.

What are the forces which France and Great Britain have at the present moment at their disposal in the West to oppose to the German army? The general character of the French army is defensive and from its structure one can more or less recognise the laws and intentions of its strategy. Its strength is relatively low in peace time. In his book, *The Military Strength of the Powers*, Max Werner cites the following French forces as stationed in Europe:

20 Infantry Divisions.
4 North African Infantry Divisions.
5 Colonial Divisions.
2 Spahi Brigades.
3 Cavalry Divisions. (A fourth is being turned into a light Motorised Division).
3 Light Mechanised Divisions.
Reserves of the Supreme Command (Tanks and Artillery).

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At the beginning of this year these forces amounted to about half a million men, including 100,000 professional soldiers. Their strength is approximately one-half of Germany's peace time army. The principal mission of this army is to form a strategic curtain within the Maginot line behind which the mobilisation of a mass army can take place undisturbed by enemy invasion. According to the French mobilisation plan the location of the French forces represents a deep echelon formation in a defensive position. The reserves of man-power and of war material in France are certainly very considerable. Six million men can be called to the colours of whom $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions (including 30,000 officers) are trained reserves. At the moment about 4 million Frenchmen are mobilised for the various services.

France possesses a stable military organisation, which has developed without interruption, and a tested cautious strategy which is a combination of mobility, defensive, and counter-offensive. Its backbone is the Maginot line, the essential and powerful expression of France's defensive strategy. The defensive character of French strategic thinking, however, has led to a certain under-estimation of such tremendous offensive arms as aviation and motorised and mechanised units.

Until 1931, France held the lead among Europe's air forces. As long as Germany was disarmed and the Soviet Union had not mastered the technique of mass plane-production, the superiority of the French air force was undisputed. But when the great European air armament race began in 1932 and 1933 France ceased to be mistress of the air. The development of the Soviet and Italian air forces in these years was not closely followed. The conservative generals of the Supreme Defence Council regarded the air arm as a mere supplement to the land forces, without any independent strategic tasks. A military critic of those days once declared that the air force must be considered as a discreet observer and a mediocre artillerist.

When, in 1934, National Socialist Germany began to build up with fantastic speed its purely offensive air force, the French General Staff and the public opinion of the country recognised the danger to France's whole national security in face of a superior German air arm. The reconstruction of the French air force began. In 1935 and 1936 an air force of 1,200 first line machines was created, consisting of 700 modern bombers and 500 modern fighters. However, the productive capacities of the French aero industry were not sufficiently utilised even within the framework of peace time production. In 1937, again quoting Max Werner:

> The French aero industry employed only 40,000 men as compared with approximately 60,000 men each by the British and Italian aero industries, about 120,000 men in the German aero industry and about 250,000 men in the Soviet aero industry. According to Pierre Cot, France produced 785 military planes in 1935 and 890 in 1936. According to *l'Oeuvre* of April 20th, 1938, however, production fell as low as 500 in 1937.

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Thus there was no question of real mass production concentrated in a few big factories of a few first-class types. France had about 30 aeroplane factories producing many different types in small numbers. In comparison with the German and Soviet aero industries and lately with the British too, the French aero industry was both small and backward.

In 1938 and 1939 great efforts were made to increase aeroplane production and thus the strength of the French Air Force. Guy de la Chambre's air programme provided for a production of 2,600 military planes in this period. France might have by now at her disposal about 3,000 first line planes. This means that the French Air Force, compared with the German, has very definite limitations.

The motorised arm of the French army faces more or less the same problems as its air force. Two opinions are characteristic of the uses of motorisation in the French army. Tanks are considered as armoured artillery advancing at infantry pace. The general conception of tank action is that tanks should be sent forward in the van of an attack in co-operation with the infantry—similar to the use of tanks in the former Spanish Republican army. Motorisation in general is considered as a technical means of obtaining the greatest possible mobility and thus ensuring the greatest possible capacity to manœuvre. Motorisation is intended to solve the transport problem of rapidly moving troops. The French army has now a special motor service with units attached to the Divisional Commands and other organisational formations. Sixty per cent. of the artillery is motorised.

It is no wonder under these circumstances that hitherto the French army has had no regularly organised motor-mechanised shock force as has Germany. There are only three light mechanised divisions with two regiments of tanks, one regiment of motorised cavalry and one regiment of motorised artillery each. Seven infantry divisions are partially motorised and there are motorised units as armoured cars and motor-cycle skirmishers within the three normal cavalry divisions. About ten tank regiments are at the disposal of the Supreme Command. The whole tank force of the French army consists approximately of 3,000 tanks and 1,000 armoured cars. There is no doubt that efforts are being made, especially after the experience of the German invasion of Poland, to form a motorised shock army consisting of at least six armoured divisions. But some time will elapse until this can be achieved.

The present forces of the French army available for operations on the Western Front consist of 75 divisions—10 of them lightly mechanised or motorised—4,000 tanks and armoured cars and approximately 3,000 first line planes. Within six months the army strength can be brought up to about 100 divisions. These forces would be in a difficult position when faced, even within the Maginot Line, with an overwhelming attack by the German army, especially if it came through Belgium and Holland or Switzerland. They are, however, strongly

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reinforced by British units, composed chiefly of motor-mechanised units, and a considerable part of the British Air Force.

Since 1937 Great Britain has rapidly built up her air force, initially with the main intention to compensate to a certain extent the strategic difficulties which arose for the British Navy on account of Italian aggression in the Mediterranean and Africa. During the last year the speed in production has been tripled and the British air force on home service will have an approximate strength of at least 4,000 first line planes. British air force cadres are still numerically weak. In spring, 1938, there were only 7,000 trained pilots in service. But since then their number has naturally considerably increased. The productive possibilities of the British aero industry are very high and it is assumed that under favourable conditions a maximum production of 6,000 planes a year could be reached. The types used in the British Air Force are of high quality—fighters of a very high speed and great mobility, and bombers with a speed of 300 miles and a range of a thousand miles. They are considered as among the best products of any European aero-industry. The British Air Force has become the most powerful in Western Europe, has overtaken the air force of Italy and occupies now the third place among European air forces after the Soviet Union and Germany.

The British army is still numerically very weak, but after the introduction of general conscription in spring, 1939, a fundamental change has begun. Within a half year 50 divisions and within a year 25 more can be organised, equipped and trained. Britain's actual contribution to the Western theatre of war is the dispatch of a mobile expeditionary corps equipped with modern arms, especially heavy motor-mechanised troops who are capable of reinforcing the motorised shock forces of the French army in a counter-offensive against the enemy.

The British General Staff never shared the conservative ideas of the French Staff with regard to the tactical employment of tanks. Chalepski, former Chief of the Department for Motorisation and Mechanisation of the Red Army, noted in the *Bolshevik* (July, 1935): "British military experts contend that the rôle of the tanks is to carry out independent tasks and operations, and that tank units are capable of accomplishing independent military operations without infantry support." These progressive ideas, however, have not been put entirely into practice. The British army of to-day is not at all that motor-mechanised shock army with heavy armoured divisions demanded by the British army reformers. Nevertheless the army reform announced by Mr. Hore Belisha in March, 1938, in the House of Commons, prepared the transformation of all British Divisions into Mechanised and Tank Divisions. Since the introduction of general conscription these plans cannot be entirely maintained, and in addition to the mechanised shock army modern-equipped infantry divisions will also be organised too. But for the first months of the war the motor-mechanised British

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Expeditionary Force, organised at the moment in two army corps each with three motorised divisions and very probably with several tank divisions, amounting all told to 160,000 men, represents a very important military factor in relation to the defensive strategy of General Gamelin.

The backbone of France's defence is the Maginot Line. The word "line" itself indicates that the French defence system consists of continuing districts of massive defence complexes. Isolated fortresses in the old sense of the word no longer exist. Permanent fortifications are closely connected throughout their whole length with each other and with the rear and the troops operating in the wide forefield. They give the High Command tactical freedom of movement and the choice of time and place for a counter-offensive either simultaneously with the enemy's big drive or after his strength and morale has been shaken after a vain offensive against this impregnable wall.

The strongest parts of the Maginot Line are situated between Longwy, near the Belgian-Luxemburg border, and Lauterberg, north of Strassbourg near the Rhine and from that point along the Rhine to Basle. But the northern sectors along the Belgian borders, especially the stretch from Valenciennes to Maubeuge, are now very well fortified. They are combined with the Belgian defence works and this combination has a greater depth even than the fortified districts running from Longwy to Lauterberg. They allow, too, a large mobility for motor-mechanised forces counter-attacking against an invading army in Belgium. The Basle Gap in the south has been filled up during the last two years. The fortification lines along the Jura Mountains in the south east have been lately strengthened and brought into communication with the Swiss defence system which consists of two independent fortified zones, one along the German border following the Rhine, and another between Biel and Zug.

Supported by the Maginot Line 75 French divisions and approximately 10 heavily armed motor-mechanised British divisions face the German border and in Northern and Eastern France the possible penetration zones of German armoured shock-troops in Belgium and Switzerland. A combined British and French air fleet consisting of at least 7,000 first line planes, including a very strong contingent of the most modern fighter types, is distributed from the Orkney Islands to Besançon, ready, together with the anti-aircraft batteries, to protect the armed forces, the navy, the industrial centres and the populations of Britain and France, or to attack or explore military objectives on German territory.

Yet, undisturbed by air attacks on the big railway centres in western and south western Germany, the German High Command was able to concentrate its shock army within and behind the Siegfried Line without losing one single man. Other German concentrations have been located in the Black Forest and along the German-Swiss Rhine border and to a much lesser degree between Aachen and Düsseldorf. The

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bulk of the German army and air force is now in the west and has so far not been attacked from the air. This fact, in complete contradiction to one of the principal rules of war—to disturb as much as possible the concentration and preparations of an enemy offensive—seems to suggest that somewhere (in Switzerland or Scandinavia ?) negotiations are going on aiming to convert the present imperialist conflict into a capitalist crusade against the Soviet Union. This possibility is further indicated by the latest attempts of Mussolini's diplomacy to create a Balkan Bloc under Fascist leadership and an Italian press campaign led by Marshal Balbo for the revival of the anti-Comintern Pact.

This solution of the problems of the present imperialist war has always to be borne in mind when reviewing the different strategic aspects of the war. It cannot be separated from the present attempts of British and French Imperialism to crush their German rival for the domination of the capitalist world. The question whether a military solution of this antagonism is possible, by a defeat of one of the opponents on the Western front, must now be investigated.

The German shock army—75 divisions strong, including the famous armoured divisions—is concentrated in considerable depth between the Luxemburg-German border and the Rhine and in the Black Forest between Freiburg and Basle. It must be considered as an army of manœuvre whose mission is not to occupy the positions of the Siegfried Line. The garrisons of the German defence system in the West consist of about 60 independent second-line divisions while a third echelon of at least 60 further divisions, partly in training and organisation, forms the Western reserve behind the Rhine.

The organisation of these considerable forces outnumbering the French and British armies by almost 5 to 2 indicates at least the operational ideas of the German High Command. Whether the plan of operations will be carried out is another question. It is apparently the intention of General von Brauchitsch to attack the Maginot Line between Metz and Strassbourg, concentrating his armoured divisions on a big push towards Nancy. This main drive is likely to be supported by a secondary operation through crossing the Rhine near Mulhouse and trying to penetrate between Belfort and Epinal into Eastern France. The operations of the 16th and 17th October between the Moselle and the Saar with the limited objective of clearing German territory from the advanced screen of the French army of manœuvre might be the sign of a very much bigger offensive in this sector.

It is very doubtful, however, whether this German offensive against the strongest part of the Maginot Line will succeed. The German High Command has at its disposal sufficient man-power and material for such an operation. The proportion of the opposing forces in this sector is certainly three to one, excluding the air forces, where probably the allied fleets have a slight superiority over the German planes. The defence system of the Maginot Line between Metz and Strassbourg,

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however, is so strong that even a mass attack of thousands of tanks would seem very unlikely to break it. The German armoured divisions in Poland and the strongly motor-mechanised Italian Littorio division in Spain were not employed against strong fortifications. Where this has been attempted, in Poland between Lodz and Kutno, and in Spain against the fortified zone of the Sagunto Road at Viver, failure has been the result. They certainly play a decisive rôle in surprise lightning attacks on unfortified or insufficiently fortified sectors or in the pursuit after a successful break of a strong fortification system by combined artillery and infantry action, as in the drives on Brest-Litovsk and towards Lwow in Poland or in January, 1939, in Spain after the Catalan defence had been broken.

Forced attack against the Maginot Line by armoured divisions will almost certainly fail after possible local successes with very heavy losses in precious material and hundreds of thousands of men. There is undoubtedly a chance that the crossing of the Rhine under formidable artillery support might succeed as did the crossing of the Marne in July, 1918, or the crossing of the Ebro, near Amposta, in face of strong enemy fortifications and troops. But on both those occasions the initial success could not be exploited. The troops had to be withdrawn after a short period of resistance. Only when a river crossing represents a surprise for the enemy and the attack is carried on immediately away from the river zone, will a lasting success be reached. That was proved by the main crossing of the Ebro in July, 1938, in the Mora, Asco and Flix sectors. A German Rhine crossing will not be a surprise operation and will certainly break down under the counter-attack of the French reserves against the possibly gained bridge-head.

The German General Staff is aware of all these considerations, and unless Hitler—which is very unlikely—decides to risk his shock army in a dangerous adventure, no big attack against the Maginot Line will be launched. It might be the fatal mistake of German strategy and therefore influential voices within the German Command will be raised against such a risky adventure. But it is very probable that the German territory occupied by the French will be completely cleaned up and that a strong German vanguard screen will be established in the French no man's land before the Maginot Line.

At the present moment it does not seem likely that a German lightning attack on Holland or Belgium is planned. There are no indications of strong troop concentrations in the adjoining German territory. Such an attempt, even if it were held up later by the French Maginot Line between Dunkirk and Longwy and by a possible counter-attack of the combined French and British motor-mechanised forces, would give the German command vast possibilities for a much more vigorous air and submarine war against Great Britain. It may even be supposed

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that long-distance guns—Hitler's secret weapon?—might be placed on the Belgian coast.

These possibilities suggest that Hitler might conceivably violate Holland's and Belgium's neutrality and launch a lightning war against these two weak countries. But taking into account the weather conditions of the autumn, which are making the Dutch defence method of flooding the country still more efficient, and the reliable Belgian defence system, such an operation would at the moment be badly timed and would have better chances of success in a drier season. Weather conditions too—snow in the Swiss Jura and the lower parts of the Alps—will very soon make an offensive through the north-west of Switzerland almost impossible. Under present conditions, therefore, it seems very doubtful whether Germany will risk, or obtain if she dares the adventure, a military solution of the situation. Almost all the chances are against her.

The chances of the French and British armies obtaining a military victory on the Western Front are, however, still more doubtful. At present their military organisation is a defensive one and they have at their disposal only a limited number of motor-mechanised troops, just sufficient for large-scale counter-attacks. They lack for at least six or nine months the necessary man-power and material to launch a war-deciding offensive against the German army, which possesses in the Siegfried Line, or better positions, a very strong defence system.

There has been much unproved talk about flooded dug-outs and pill boxes, collapsed concrete and other defects. Certainly Germany's Western Wall does not possess the mighty concrete and steel fortifications of the Maginot Line with all the modern defence technique. But it has the advantage over the Maginot Line of greater depth. It consists of a multitude of small resistance centres which have the advantage of being very difficult to recognise beforehand, thousands of tank-traps and continuous anti-tank barriers where natural obstacles do not exist. The garrisons of this immense fortified zone are located in such a form that the counter-attack becomes an automatic part of the whole defence system. For the moment this Western Wall of Germany, reinforced by the whole bulk of the German Army, will not be broken by the present British and French forces.

A decision in the air is also quite impossible. The opposing air forces are pretty evenly balanced and will therefore probably abstain from ruthless bombardments. Conditions for a decision in naval and economic warfare are far from being ripe. The German submarine fleet, however, has suffered considerable losses which indicate that German hopes of a success in unlimited submarine warfare are vanishing. It can be summed up in one sentence: the war has reached a military deadlock while a naval or economic decision will need a very long time to develop.

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These strategic aspects of the present situation underline the justness of the increasing demand for peace of the international working class, which does not want to be slaughtered before the Maginot or Siegfried Line in the interests of British, French or German Imperialism. The mighty Soviet Union has established peace in the East. Let her take the lead in a general world peace conference. She is the best guarantee that the interests of the workers and of all progressive human beings will be truly represented, in face of the imperialist warmongers in Great Britain, France and Germany in a drive for peace which will lead to Freedom and Socialism.

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War on the Soviet Union?

BY STEPHEN RAZIN

THE FIRST SEVEN weeks of the war have been marked by three outstanding facts. The U.S.S.R. has been immensely strengthened and has moved forward into a predominant position in the world. In the west, both sides—Allied and German—have displayed extreme reluctance to begin senseless slaughter, of the kind practised during the last years of the war of 1914-18, while the Soviet Union moves from strength to strength in eastern Europe. The National Government's anti-Soviet inclinations, after a brief period of "black-out," at the beginning of the war, in order to persuade the British people that "Hitlerism" is the enemy, have once again come to the fore.

Already the combination of these factors has raised the question in many minds of a "switch-over" of the war into an attack on the Soviet Union, either now or at a later stage. More and more frank are becoming those Tories who sigh for a Government in Germany which would once again return to the fold, and be a loyal instrument of Anglo-French imperialist hatred of the U.S.S.R. Mr. Duff-Cooper blurts out, in New York, his hope for a "right-wing revolution" against Hitler—one which would put in power those militarist Junkers on whom the Kaiser relied, but who in present circumstances might agree to be the creatures of Mr. Chamberlain. Simultaneously the Paris *Temps*—spokesmen at once of the French Foreign Office and of the iron and steel magnates—denounces the German Pact of Non-Aggression with the U.S.S.R. as "the inexpiable crime of National Socialism, in the eyes of posterity . . . . the Hitlerian treason . . . . the defeat of European civilisation." And significantly enough the *Temps*, like Mr. Duff-Cooper, appeals (October 18) first and foremost to "what remains of the old bourgeoisie and the landed nobility, the high civil servants and a section of the officers' corps."

The immense strengthening of the U.S.S.R. is beyond question. Here is the verdict of an enemy of the Soviet Union—"Scrutator," in the *Sunday Times* of October 15:

> This Russian treaty cost Germany the friendship of Franco in Spain, the support of Italy, and the assistance of Japan, in which lay her only chance of victory at sea. In addition, Germany has lost all hope of supremacy in the Baltic, of expansion in the Balkans or towards the Black Sea through the Ukraine. Before, Hitler had had all the luck in his aggression; since the Russian treaty, his luck has left him.

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The Red Army has reclaimed for the Soviet Union the territories and the peoples torn from it in 1920. In doing so, as Mr. Churchill himself publicly admitted on October 1, it was only doing what was "clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace." Incidentally, by his statement that "we could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland," Mr. Churchill has passed severe condemnation on the policy of his own associates in the National Government, who, so far from wishing that, deliberately rejected the offer of the Red Armies to cross Polish territory as friends and allies.

In western Byelorussia and western Ukraine—the redeemed territories—the peasants are dividing the land, while carefully preserving their former landlords' mansions and art treasures for the benefit of the people; the workmen have set going abandoned factories and formed supervision committees in those many small works where the employer has not fled and consequently has been allowed to remain in control of his enterprise; public order is maintained by workers' guards, recruited from among the most trustworthy and steady members of the trade unions, which have sprung up everywhere once the crushing hand of the Polish police was removed; hundreds of schools, conducted in the local language for the first time after many years, have been opened, and tens of thousands of children previously doomed to illiteracy have had the gates of a new life opened to them; thousands of intellectual and professional workers, condemned under the backward economy and barbarous jingo régime of the Polish landlords to chronic unemployment, are finding employment in their own speciality for the first time. All the stories in the newspapers about Polish officers being hunted down for execution, about massacres of priests and closing of churches, about the slaughter of the former nobles, are barefaced lies. Nobles and priests took part in the elections to National Assemblies of the western Byelorussian and western Ukrainian peoples on October 22, the churches are open, nothing worse than internment has happened to the Polish officers, and even mass meetings of factory owners (!) have been held to arrange for the most effective co-operation with the new authorities.

Only lunatics can think that these liberated peoples will ever go back to the rule of the Pilsudski régime. And though the Germans are maintaining strict censorship over what is happening in the areas of Poland proper occupied by their army, it is certain that the spectacle of what is happening under the protection of the Red Army will have its effect when the future fate of the Poles is being decided —not necessarily in accordance with the wishes of Hitler. It cannot be stressed too strongly that the Soviet-German Pact, in recognising a "frontier of State interests" between the areas occupied by the Soviet and German forces, did not thereby lay down that the Soviet Union endorses the annexation of Poland by Germany. Hitler may

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arrange the mode of government of Poland as seems good to him at present, just as the Kaiser did when his forces occupied the Ukraine in the Spring of 1918. The responsibility for the one as for the other occupation falls upon the British and French Governments, who scarcely lifted a finger to help Poland in 1939 just as they would not lift a finger to help the young Soviet Republic in 1918. But the U.S.S.R. no more takes responsibility for Germany's administration in occupied Poland than it did for the puppet régime of Hetman Skoropadski in the Ukraine in 1918.

More than that: confounding all the wiseacres who for years built their plans for German aggression against the Ukraine on the presumption that the U.S.S.R. is in deadly fear of direct contact with Germany, the new frontier of State interests passes in the north along the frontier of East Prussia. For the first time since 1918, the Soviet Union has a common frontier with Germany: one, moreover, which runs closest of all to the feudal estates of the great Junker magnates. That is both a sign and a pledge for the future of the immense increase in power of the U.S.S.R.

The advance of the Red Army along the Rumanian border and that of Carpathian Ukraine, until it rested some way along the borders of Slovakia, has had an immense repercussion in the Balkans. In Rumania, the governing class has feverishly set about opening schools and licensing newspapers for the Russian minority in Bessarabia, the German and Hungarian minorities in the west. In Carpathian Ukraine, the most ignorant peasantry now know that it is no more a question of "sewing the Ukrainian coat on to the Carpathian button," but of the reverse—should anyone be so foolhardy as to raise the question. In Slovakia, the *Times* correspondent at Bratislava tells us (October 24), the Minister of Propaganda has explained that "no change which may come over Europe will find Slovakia unprepared, as the country has no great landlords or Jewish capitalists." This reference to the possible extension of Soviet influence, says the correspondent, echoes the feeling of the capitals in south-eastern Europe that "Germany is losing influence in favour of Russia throughout the Balkan and Danubian States." In Bulgaria, writes the *Times* correspondent at Sofia on the same day, "almost the whole country is pro-Russian. Since the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact, there has been a significant growth of Communism which the authorities now hesitate to suppress."

So also in the Baltic—and here it is not only German influence that has been broken, and the defeat of which has taken such a spectacular form, in the evacuation of thousands of "Baltic German" squires, civil servants, officers, business men and rich peasants from the seats of privilege, in which they were confirmed for hundreds of years as a colonising force, first by the German Emperors and Kings of Prussia and then by the Russian autocracy. The conclusion of

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mutual assistance pacts between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the other has been a shrewd blow at the preparations of British Imperialism for a repetition of the interventionist tactics of 1918-20. During those years, it was the co-operation, first of the British Fleet and later of British money and British military missions with German freebooters that overthrew the Soviet Republics in these countries and used the latter as a base for invasion of Soviet Russia. Since the end of the Civil War, British finance capital has bound Estonia and Latvia as tightly as possible to the London market by a series of commercial treaties, while there have been rumours of darker dealings by the British Secret Service in both countries. Certain it is that, whenever the Soviet courts have had to take action against foreign espionage organisations, a Latvian or Estonian Consul seemed by some fatal chance to be almost invariably mixed up in the affair. In Finland, whose independence was recognised freely and voluntarily by the Soviet Government on December 31, 1917, it was the German Army which was called in by the Finnish "patriots," headed by Mannerheim, against the Finnish Soviets which seized power in the middle of January, 1918. The end of the Finnish Civil War, three months later, was marked by a bloody massacre of 30,000 workers of Helsingfors, Viborg and other industrial centres, which was denounced at the time by such newspapers as the *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News*—now so voluble about an entirely imaginary "war of independence." If the small Baltic Republics were strongholds of British influence during recent years, Finland—through the General Staff and reactionary parties who rule the country behind the façade of parliamentary democracy—was a German outpost on the Soviet border.

To-day, this situation has been almost completely changed. The pacts of mutual assistance signed by the U.S.S.R. have given it a series of naval and air bases all along the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland and the eastern Baltic. At the same time, the complete independence and integrity of the respective Republics, including their Fascist or semi-Fascist social systems, have been respected—even to the point of recognising that the Soviet bases remain the territory of the Republic concerned—ample military supplies for their armed forces have been guaranteed, advantageous commercial treaties which have trebled or quadrupled their trade with the U.S.S.R. have been signed, and they have been given outlets for their produce, over Soviet canals and railways, to the ice-free port of Murmansk and the Black Sea ports: whence they can trade with Britain and other countries without having to run the gauntlet of the German Fleet. In the case of Lithuania, the break-up of what, to be accurate, should be called the "Polish Empire" (for it had its colonies every whit as miserable, exploited and helpless as any other in the world) has given the Soviet Union the opportunity of handing over the ancient

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Lithuanian capital of Vilna, recognised as such by the Soviet-Lithuanian Friendship Treaty of 1926, and taken from Lithuania by violence in 1920, in much the same way as the Polish generals tore western Ukraine and western Byelorussia from the U.S.S.R.

Of course, these treaties have been denounced as establishing "protectorates" of the Soviet Union over the Baltic States. The Labour and Liberal press in particular has been most vociferous about the imaginary wrongs of the poor little Baltic States. These crocodile tears are all the more repellent when we remember that they might have looked to the British Empire for examples of real protectorates, in all their ugly reality, and could have asked themselves whether any protectorate yet known—either in Bohemia-Moravia or in British West Africa—has ever guaranteed to the "protected" absolute political and economic independence, with defence against a very real external aggressor, and at the same time has confined the armed forces of the "protector" to strictly limited and isolated areas. Precisely in order to hide the real reasons why the Baltic States accepted the Soviet proposals, the capitalist press raised an outcry about imaginary hundreds of thousands of Red troops concentrated, first against one and then against another, all of which in turn were exposed as pure invention. Naturally enough, the kind of protectorate familiar to the mind of a capitalist politician cannot be imposed except by the threat of overwhelming force. To have allowed the public to think that the treaties of mutual assistance were accepted by the rulers of the respective republics as a far-seeing and voluntary act of policy would have meant drawing attention to some very unpleasant facts about Allied policy.

What facts? The Latvian President Ulmanis alluded to them very transparently in his broadcast on October 12, explaining why the Soviet-Latvian Pact was signed:

> The Pact was concluded in conditions of tension, and therefore its stipulations are unusual. But for all that, it places on a firm basis, and in an even clearer manner than before, our relations with our great neighbour in the East. We deeply appreciate this good neighbourliness. Certain people, who neglected good relations with their neighbours, seeking only far-away friendships, have had to pay dearly for it. Our Pact with the U.S.S.R., concluded in a spirit of mutual confidence and good faith, gives us security and freedom from threats of war. It increases the security of Russia, too. The same applies to our northern and southern neighbours—Estonia and Lithuania. The good faith of the U.S.S.R. is further proved by the restoration of Vilna to Lithuania . . . . No one is trying to impose any change of régime on us from the outside. If there should be any among us who think so, we will give them the proper reply.

Stripped of its diplomatic phraseology, the meaning of this statement is perfectly clear. The Fascist rulers of the Baltic States have realised that they can no longer go on leaning alternately towards Germany and Russia, with the comfortable knowledge that a "far-away friend"

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—British imperialism—would support them against either if need be. Germany has been swallowing up one small country after another, while the Soviet Union has shown its readiness for peace and good neighbourliness up to the very threshold of the war. As for the "far-away friend," all the Baltic States have had before them the terrifying spectacle of that friend not lifting a finger to help a far greater State, with a population five or six times as large as all theirs put together, and that State—Poland—despite its large army and air force, going down like a pack of cards before the blast of the immense German war machine. If the British and French imperialists basely deserted a country to which they had pledged their loyal "immediate assistance" only a few months before, and did not even attempt to create a serious diversion to relieve the pressure on the distracted Polish Army, what would be the chances of three little countries to whom Britain and France had not given their (apparently fatal) guarantee?

Although at the time of writing the Soviet negotiations with Finland have not been completed, there seems to be no reason for belief that the same considerations will not weigh with the Finnish Government. Of course, there has been a still greater spate of lying stories about gigantic Soviet forces on the Finnish border, which thinned down in the course of time to a mere division—probably less than the Finnish Government maintains at the frontier in normal times. Even louder has been the bellow of sympathy with "poor little Finland," and the mobilisation of such an outcry against the fancied aggression of the U.S.S.R. that it finally terrorised the population of Finland itself. However, the negotiations have survived all the "kindly" efforts of Finland's new-found friends, and there is no reason to believe that here, too, an arrangement will not be found which makes allowances for the fact that Finland in recent years has been associated with the so-called "neutral bloc" including the Scandinavian countries.

The net result has been to lock, bolt and bar the Baltic entrance to the Soviet Union. That is a blow, of course, for potential aggression from Germany, but equally so it closes the door to aggression by British imperialism—and it must not be forgotten that it is a British submarine, not a German, which to-day forms part of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, after having been fished up from the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, where it was sent in 1919 during a raid on the forces of the Soviet Republic.

No doubt it is with those freer days in mind that, in the negotiations with Turkey, the British and French Governments have insisted on Turkey maintaining under all circumstances her option (permitted by the Montreux Convention of 1936) to allow foreign warships into the Black Sea in time of war. It is child's talk to say that Britain and France have insisted on this right in order to be able to help Rumania if she is attacked by Germany: what can British and French naval

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help amount to, in such an event, compared with the assistance which the U.S.S.R. could have rendered, as Rumania's immediate neighbour, under a mutual assistance pact covering Turkey as well? But it is now clear that the Soviet Union has finally and irrevocably turned away from the policy of accepting one-sided agreements. That was why the Turkish-Soviet negotiations in Moscow led to no pact. The Soviet Government was not prepared to give Turkey a guarantee against all attacks, including one from Germany, when the Turkish Government for its part insisted on leaving open the loophole, in its guarantee to the U.S.S.R., that it would remain neutral if Britain and France sent their warships against the U.S.S.R. Even the millions of the Bank of England and the Banque de France have not proved sufficient to win the Turkish Government away completely from the path of elementary common sense and self-preservation. The neutrality loophole has its other aspect, therefore, that it keeps Turkey free to refuse participation in an Anglo-French war against the U.S.S.R.; and some further attempts to reinforce Turko-Soviet friendship are not out of the question. But the story of the negotiations with Turkey are the clearest possible indication so far of the hostility and alarm aroused among the British and French reactionaries by the Soviet advance.

This Soviet advance is the real background for the "funny kind of war" about which so many millions of people have been speculating in Britain and France, and indeed all over the world. Not only that the rulers of both Britain and France, on the one hand, and of Nazi Germany on the other, feared the effect of mass slaughter, for a few miles of concrete-lined trenches, on their respective armed nations, who are very far from being the same nations as in 1914, after the gigantic political experiences of recent years. But also on both sides the capitalist governments have realised that the more their insoluble mutual contradictions lead them to weaken each other, the more immense and unshakeable becomes the power of the Soviet Union. The more vividly must they be reminded of Stalin's warning that if the capitalists in spite of everything launch a new world war, they must not blame anyone but themselves if some of their number are "missing" at the end of it—a true revolutionary modernisation of the warning which the whole Labour movement gave to the world at the Basle Congress of the old International in 1912.

This fear of Soviet influence, multiplying the significance of potential discontent among their own peoples a hundredfold, has shown itself in a number of ways already. First, there has been the uninterrupted stream of anti-Soviet propaganda, utilising every conceivable excuse —the advance of the Red Army through Poland, the alleged terrorising of the Baltic States, the fantastic inventions about a Soviet "alliance" with Germany. Secondly, following on the unhindered German overthrow of Poland, has come the long "truce" on the western front.

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Thirdly, and no less significant, came the renewed hints in the ultra-reactionary press that in the long run Bolshevism is the enemy, not Hitlerism, and that perhaps an accommodation could be found with the enemies of the U.S.S.R.—if not with the Hitler Government in Germany, then with some reliable substitute, and in any case with Japan (on the basis of a delimitation of interests in China and a Japanese attack on the U.S.S.R.).

There is no more reason to suppose that this latter calculation will be successful than was the calculation that Hitler would obligingly become the spearhead of an attack on the tremendous power of the Socialist Soviet Union. The Japanese already had a taste, more than once, of what it feels like to be up against the Red Army. They too, if they are driven to it, may yet turn Mr. Chamberlain's calculations into a fiasco by doing a little calculation themselves as to whose positions in the Far East are more easily accessible.

But perhaps the supreme example of how class hatred and prejudice are driving the ruling classes of Britain and France to ride roughshod over the interests of the people is in the sphere of their own direct relations with the Soviet Government. About France it is hardly necessary to speak ; the French capitalist class is more and more openly talking of the necessity of breaking up Germany, as a guarantee against further German Imperialist expansion. Knowing that the overthrow of Hitler will be the work of the German working class, which will be in no mood to allow the potential German Socialist Republic to fall asunder into a welter of French puppet States—Catholic monarchies, " Democratic " republics and Fascist principalities—the French imperialists are preparing for that eventuality by the foulest campaign of slander against the U.S.S.R., and by a violent attack on the Communist Party, the unity of the trade union movement and all the achievement of the Popular Front years in the factories and workshops. But the British ruling class is so filled with the same violent hostility to the U.S.S.R., without the same immediate pretext, that it is committing gross stupidities that its leading statesmen themselves would have denounced 15 years ago.

The Soviet Government has twice informed the British Government that it remains neutral. If Mr. Chamberlain renounced his imbecile dream of involving the U.S.S.R. in war with Germany against its own will, his own imperial interests—if not those of the British people —would dictate the utilisation of such a declaration as the basis for negotiations, at any rate, assuring Soviet neutrality in the conflict. Similarly with the Soviet offer to discuss a trade agreement. At the very moment that this offer was made, on September 27, the British press was full of complaints that Soviet trade was going to Germany. What more simple, it would seem, than seize on such an opportunity and open negotiations with the U.S.S.R. for a far-reaching trade agreement ? But in reality a whole month went by without a single

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step being taken for this purpose. Any and every kind of ridiculous pretext was sought to justify inaction. Only under extreme pressure from all parties in Parliament, and in face of signs that the patience of the Soviet Union was coming to an end, were the first grudging steps taken to open conversations.

The reason for this attitude was sufficiently clear. It was inveterate hostility to the very idea of a trade agreement which might encourage popular inclination in Great Britain to closer relations with the U.S.S.R. The whole orientation of the National Government is towards war with the U.S.S.R. and to this end all others—even those of the present war—are subordinated more and more, as time goes on.

This, too, is the explanation of the refusal to consider the Soviet proposal for peace negotiations, embodied in a Soviet-German communique and the *Izvestia* editorial of October 9. Even the full text of the latter was concealed from the public by the press, for obvious reasons. The article in *Izvestia* made it perfectly clear that the U.S.S.R. takes no responsibility for the particular proposals hinted at by Hitler in his Reichstag speech and does not suggest that they constitute the essential basis for peace. All the *Izvestia* editorial said was that they could be the basis of *negotiations*, in the course of which they could be accepted, rejected or amended, i.e., the fact of their having been made could be used as the starting point for negotiations of a very different character from those which Hitler, with German imperialist aims at heart, has in mind. A Government which was genuinely out to try and "reconstitute Poland" and to create "guarantees for European security," as the National Government has declared its desire to do, would seize at such an opportunity, and would consult with the U.S.S.R.—the force of which Hitler has shown that he is more afraid than of any other—as to the best means of bringing about these results. But as the British Government has imperialist war aims, no less than the French or the German, it rejects the opportunity, misrepresents the Soviet offer, and allows its servile press to deceive the British people by hiding from them the text of the offer.

This in itself is an answer to those unconscious victims of Tory propaganda who start wise ruminations on what kind of peace a conference at the present time would bring, in view of Hitler's occupation of Poland, of the uncertainty as to Chamberlain's war aims, etc. A peace conference to-day, and even the opening of peace negotiations during the present "truce," when they are still a possibility, can only come in the same way that a peace *bloc* could have been brought about between March and August of this year—namely, by the union of all progressive forces and particularly of the working class for a terrific fight *against* Chamberlain. If Chamberlain, and still more if any new government, entered into negotiations with such a force driving them, with the Soviet Union on one side of the Council table, and Hitler, immensely weakened internally and externally by the

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events of the last two months, and only the devastated half of Poland as a visible asset, on the third side—can anyone in his senses deny that such negotiations at such a conference would for the first time make possible, not only an end to the present war, but also the beginnings of real European security ?

The Soviet Union can be trusted to go on fighting for this, and in the meantime, pursuing an independent policy in the interests of world Socialism, to make use of every opportunity for reinforcing its position against the imperialist bandits on either side. The cause of this first great section of humanity to take the irrevocable step demanded by the present stupendous epoch in human history—the epoch of passing from capitalism to Socialism—is even more than ever to-day the cause of the British and French workers.

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France on the Road to Fascism

BY RICHARD GOODMAN

UNANSWERABLE PROOF THAT the present war is not a war "against fascism," but an imperialist war between the rival British, French and German imperialisms sharing equally the responsibility for its outbreak, is provided by those events in France which have led to the suppression of the French Communist Party.

A brief examination of these events taken in conjunction with the two other outstanding features of French war policy—the attempts to win over fascist Italy and fascist Spain as allies in this "anti-fascist war," and the campaign for the "atomisation" of a conquered Germany in the best Foch tradition—provides us with an unambiguous picture of an imperialist power waging a purely imperialist war.

The drive against the French Communist Party, to isolate it, stifle it and finally to suppress it had, of course, begun long before the war broke out. Following the successful attacks of the French bourgeoisie against the Popular Front, attacks in which they were assisted by the Socialist leadership, the mass of the French working class and ever-increasing sections of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry were beginning to turn in a decisive manner to the Communist Party for that clear and unhesitating leadership in a new and sharper counter-offensive against capitalism. The French Communist Party was, indeed, on the road to becoming the undisputed and sole leader not only of the working class but of the majority of the whole French nation.

The threat, although not immediate, was too great for the French bourgeoisie to ignore. It was increased by the fact that—as has now been clearly established—the ruling Two Hundred Families never had the slightest intention of fighting anything but a "straightforward imperialist war without any Red Commissars mucking around on any of our fronts."

It was for this reason that the Daladier-Bonnet Government sought and obtained its plenary powers and "postponed" the approaching general election which it knew would result in important Communist gains, especially in the industrial areas.

It was for this reason that the same reactionary press, which sought to depict the Communists as "war-mongers" because of their advocacy of collective security when such was still a practical proposition, sought under Bonnet's leadership to create the impression that the

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delays and final breakdown of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations in Moscow were due solely to " Russian intransigeance."

It was for this reason that the tendency represented by Paul Faure in the Socialist Party and the " pure syndicalists," like Belin, in the C.G.T., were encouraged and even financed by the Bonnet clique (it is well known that Paul Faure's weekly *Le Pays Socialiste* was financed almost entirely by Bonnet).

And it was for this reason that Bonnet tried, but failed, to obtain the conviction of Lucien Sampaix, one of the editors of *L'Humanité*, under the decree laws, hoping that once this had been done it would be possible to proceed to suppress the paper itself and thereby deprive the Communist Party of its greatest agitator and organiser.

In short the French bourgeoisie were only awaiting a favourable opportunity to strike at the Communist Party and while waiting were preparing all their positions for such an attack.

The confusion of public opinion was caused by the blatant misrepresentation by the French press of the course of the Moscow negotiations and its complete suppression of Anglo-French responsibility for their breakdown.

No one who was in France at the time will ever forget the hysterical anti-Communist outburst by the bourgeoisie and above all by the so-called socialist press at the time of the conclusion of the pact. The campaign got off the mark too well to be anything but carefully prepared. The French imperialists and their shadows and lackeys, the French Socialist leaders, furious that the U.S.S.R. had taken practical steps in keeping with Stalin's warning, launched a campaign of revenge against the Communist Party. In so doing they also prepared for the imperialist war which their rejection of the Soviet Pact had made inevitable.

One of the main arguments used in this campaign, especially be it noted by Leon Blum, was that it was the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact which made the war inevitable. Nothing of course can be more incorrect. It is true of course that neither the British nor French working class recognised the real situation at the time, but that the French bourgeoisie realised and had realised for a long time the implications of the Anglo-French-Polish refusal of Red Army assistance is now perfectly obvious. How else can one explain the fact that, with the solitary exception of *L'Ordre*, not a single French paper carried a report of Voroshilov's interview with the Soviet Press ? The actual situation was that the refusal of the tri-partite pact and of Soviet military assistance to Poland by the British, French and Polish Governments rendered the war inevitable and rendered inevitable its imperialist character. Indeed both French and British advocates of the three-power defensive agreement had admitted this by implication when they declared that war could be prevented *only* by means of such an agreement. Its rejection made it inevitable both that

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war would result and that the U.S.S.R. should take the necessary steps to prevent itself from being involved in such an imperialist war.

The anti-Communist outburst was of hyæna-like ferocity paralleled only by the anti-communist tirades in a fascist state. The fact that it attained its highest pitch in the social-democratic press and in the mouths of the socialist leaders was significant although inevitable. Indeed, the anti-communist agitation of the socialist leadership provided the bourgeoisie and its government with precisely that semblance of " popular revulsion " which was necessary for it to act.

As the first necessary step in the campaign to destroy the Party it was necessary to silence it, to prevent it exposing the lies, slanders and misrepresentations crowding the columns of the capitalist and social-democratic press, to prevent it revealing the real significance of the capitalist attacks and mobilising the masses in defence, in short to isolate it.

Hence the suppression of *L'Humanité*—a paper with the second largest circulation in Paris and the third largest in the whole of the country—and of *Ce Soir*, the widely circulating, sole progressive evening paper.

The part played by the Socialist leadership in providing the Government with an excuse for such attacks is very clearly shown in this case. The day after the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact the Executive Commission of the Seine Federation of the Socialist Party met and adopted a resolution which declared, *inter alia :*

> The *volte face* of the Soviet Government in extending its hand to Hitler strikes a redoubtable blow to the Front of Peace and Freedom. (Note the fact that once again the assumption is made that the Peace Front was (*a*) in existence, which it was not ; and (*b*) was broken by the U.S.S.R. and not, as in reality, by the British, French and Polish Governments.—R.G.)
>
> It allows Hitler to go forward with his longing for the reactionary conquest of Europe.
>
> In France, certain journalists, in an attempt to explain this indefensible attitude, are forcing themselves to justify this treason in *L'Humanité* (founded by Jaurès) and in *Ce Soir*.

The resolution goes on to appeal with incredible impertinence to the rank and file Communists to join the Socialists and reject " a policy which turns its back on the proletarian revolutionary spirit."

We may note, as our only comment, firstly, how suddenly these socialist leaders have become " revolutionary " and, secondly, that, at the very moment when they were accusing the Communists of rejecting the proletarian revolution, the organ of the Comité des Forges was saying precisely the opposite and accusing the Communists of, in fact, always being revolutionaries !

With the suspension of *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir*, the attacks increased. Local and central offices of the Communist Party and, indeed, of organisations of a clear non-communist character were raided by the

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police, documents seized, property mishandled. When the local party organisations and cells began to issue duplicated copies of *L'Humanité* and of their district papers which had also been suppressed a wave of arrests began. But the duplicated sheets appeared all the same and are still continuing to appear (as press reports of arrests prove). And not only were they distributed but they were read eagerly—a man who sold one of the bourgeois evening newspapers told me, for example, that in five minutes he distributed to known sympathisers sixty-three copies of the local duplicated sheet while on his usual rounds. The masses of the working class began to realise the significance of the Soviet-German Pact and to agitate for the lifting of the ban on the Communist press.

It was obvious that the Daladier-Bonnet Government had to act quickly, but before it could act against the Party as such it had to isolate it as far as possible from the trade union movement. Here again it was given all the assistance necessary by the reactionary socialist and trade union leadership.

At a meeting of the Chamber Foreign Affairs Commission on August 26, the Socialist Grumbach raised the question of whether it was possible for confidential matters to be discussed in the Commission in the presence of Communist members "without having been assured that they condemn the Moscow Government."

The cue was taken up by the radical socialist, Gaston Riou, who declared:

> Your party is the party of the enemy, the instrument of the enemy. We must not, we cannot, without being guilty of treason, discuss anything here at this time before our communist colleagues have broken their bonds.

The policy sponsored by the socialists of excluding the communists from all organisations either public or working class, a policy loudly cheered and encouraged by the reactionary press, especially the semi-official *Le Temps*, was accelerated and extended.

Three trade union federations, notorious for their reactionary leadership, adopted almost identical resolutions which declared that:

> "they cannot accept, even indirectly, any responsibility in the sphere of trade union action with those who have made themselves the defenders of treason," and that, in consequence, they had decided "not to collaborate with the members of the Bureau of the Confederation and of the Administrative Commission who have repeatedly declared themselves in favour of the Soviet-German Pact."

A leading article in *Le Temps* entitled "A Declaration" let forth a shriek of joy and commented:

> On September 1 the majority of the Administrative Commission of the C.G.T. condemned the Soviet-German Pact. A minority, however, linked with the Communist Party, still preserved its illusions or, even, approving the Muscovite duplicity, actively took part in it. Such an attitude is to-day no longer possible. It is certain that the majority of the workers' organisations will follow without hesitation the example

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(of the three federations) who refuse to have even contact with the agents of the Third International, the ally of Hitlerism (*Le Temps*, September 17, 1939).

French reaction saw very well that once it had been able to drive the Communists from the unions it would be able not only to strike directly at the Party but, in collaboration with the social-democratic leaders, attack working conditions in the factories, liquidating and more what remained of the victories of the Popular Front.

In many cases flouting all union rules, the reactionaries proceeded everywhere to do as the organ of the Comité des Forges told them.

Where they held the majority a packed meeting on a snap vote arbitrarily expelled communist and militant officials. Where a majority was not obtained, the aid of the police was invoked and obtained. Union committees were given the alternative of either condemning the Soviet Pact and expelling the Communists or of being closed down.

The Confederal Bureau of the C.G.T. and its Administrative Commission followed suit and adopted a resolution in the most cantingly hypocritical terms which stated that:

> there is no longer any collaboration with those who will not or cannot condemn such an attitude which abandons all principles of human solidarity which is the essence of our working-class movement.

Deprived of its press, with its militants being arrested every day, attacked by the hyænas of reaction, the Communist Party was unable effectively to reply to these slanders.

With the entry of the Red Army into what had been Polish Byelo-Russia and Polish Ukraine the campaign was further intensified, but always with the same theme—that the communists were agents of Hitler, etc.

In an attempt to paint the U.S.S.R. as an aggressor and to deny the fact that the Polish state and the Polish army and government had, as such, ceased to exist, Leon Blum even went so far as to invent Polish military resistance to the Red Army. Writing in *Populaire* under the title "An Atrocious Development," he naïvely declared:

> The truth is that a Poland still exists. The proof of its existence is that, with almost inconceivable courage, the Polish army, while resisting foot by foot the Nazi enemy, is fighting against the new invader" (*Populaire*, September 19, 1939).

At the height of this new phase of the campaign, the Government struck. On September 27 the Conseil des Ministres decreed the dissolution of the Party and immediately the police swooped down and closed all party headquarters.

Yet even this was not sufficient for the reactionaries who in this "war against fascism" had left untouched the open fascist parties of Doriot and La Rocque and had done nothing to suppress the real allies of Hitler in their own ranks.

Again setting the pace, *Le Temps* pointed out:

> The Communist Party has been dissolved . . . . But what will become of the elected representatives of the Communist Party and notably

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> its deputies and municipal representatives ? So far as the municipalities are concerned, nothing is more simple. The executive power can suspend or remove Communist mayors . . . . There remains the question of the Parliamentary deputies and here the problem becomes more complex, at least on the surface . . . . The presence of these representatives hinders the work, so vital at the moment, of the commissions. It places an obstacle in the way of parliamentary control . . ." (September 30, 1939).

Soon after all communist municipal councils were suspended until the end of hostilities and replaced by " délégations spéciales " of three members appointed by the Government in consultation with the local police.

The attack on the Communist deputies, hitherto untouchable because of their parliamentary immunity, was evidently imminent and, note, was being advocated for reasons that have originated from the socialists.

In order to make this more difficult, the Communist deputies decided to form themselves—for parliamentary purposes only—into a Worker and Peasant Group.

This group went to work at once and, on the occasion of the Soviet peace proposals, sent a letter to the President of the Chamber, M. Herriot, asking him to intervene with the Government so that :

> " Parliament shall be recalled to debate publicly the whole problem of peace " and that " those deputies with the armed forces can take part in the deliberations."

The letter further pointed out that :

> It is absolutely necessary to prevent an *a priori* rejection of the peace propositions . . . . We want with all our heart a just and lasting peace and we think that it can be obtained rapidly, for standing against the imperialist war-makers and Hitler Germany, gripped by its internal contradictions, there is the power of the Soviet Union which makes possible a policy of collective security guaranteeing peace and safeguarding the independence of France.

A new howl went up, although what the Communist deputies were demanding was no different from what Mr. Lloyd George had demanded in the English House of Commons (his speech, however, was hardly noticed in the French press—*Le Temps*, for instance, gave two lines to the demand for a private session).

A resolution adopted by the Socialist parliamentary group by 115 votes to 8 with 8 abstentions, declared that the action of the Soviet Government was " treason " (to whom was not stated—presumably to the Daladier-Bonnet Government and the snivelling Blum) and that the leaders of the Communist Party had " approved it."

The resolution continued :

> Enslaved for years to a doctrine which is the very negation of democratic socialism, they have not desired to give up their ignoble complicity. The group brands their attitude and thoroughly approves the action of the C.G.T. and the federations which have expelled them . . . .

The resolution ends by a quotation from a speech by Chamberlain in the House of Commons and with a declaration that the group approves of Chamberlain's attitude without reservation.

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Under the title " Communist Treason," *Le Temps* wrote :

> The salvation of the country demands the implacable repression of all those who may compromise victory . . . .
>
> All secret reorganisation under whatever form of the French section of the Third International has become in truth a crime against the nation. (*Le Temps*, October 5, 1939).

Once again the Government struck. Having deprived by a manœuvre the communist deputies of their parliamentary immunity, the authorities issued warrants for their arrest. One after another these elected representatives of the French working class were picked up to be brought in batches before military tribunals. Some, it is rumoured as I write, are to be tried for " high treason " as Communists were tried in Nazi Germany. Others who have so far escaped arrest and are continuing to lead the struggle against the war—Thorez, Jacques, Duclos, Bonte, Ramette, Monmousseau among them—are being sought in a veritable man-hunt.

Despite, however, this hysterical terror, the Party has as a whole stood firm. There have been, it is true, some desertions. But they are few, a fact established by the extraordinary publicity given by the press to those who have deserted. As a whole the Communist Party of France, true to the spirit of revolutionary internationalism and to the best interests of the working people of France, fights on, sure of ultimate victory. And already the French worker and peasant and the French soldier are beginning to understand what this attack on their Party means.

The trade unions are being transformed into integral parts of the capitalist war machine, working hours are being extended to 70 hours in the factories although the wages paid when the 40-hour week was in operation have not been increased, the condition and rights of the whole nation are being destroyed.

Once again the most revealing comment is provided by *Le Temps* :

> In ridding itself of the Bolshevik ferment, French trade unionism is returning to a more reasonable and happier conception. How much suffering and wastage of wealth could have been prevented if the trade union workers had always defied the agents of the Third International. To-day they will realise to what lamentable adventures they have been led. They realise the clarity of vision of their old leaders who have always put them on their guard against the illusions and intrigues of Bolshevism. They are rediscovering at one and the same time both their sense of order and their national sense, inseparable the one from the other.

And it is not only the French working people who are suffering from this attack. Having, it hopes, rid itself of the French Communist Party, French reaction which did so much to betray the Spanish people before it betrayed its own, is now openly showing its friendship with Franco.

The following quotation provides, I believe, an appropriate conclusion to our account :

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> General Franco has appealed to all his compatriots who are refugees in this country to return to their own land. Many have obeyed. Many are those, however, who have answered this appeal by a refusal. The French authorities of the Basses-Pyrenees have just notified these immigrants that they are compelled to leave our territory. One after another other communes are following suit. (*Le Temps*, October 4, 1939).

So the treachery which began with non-intervention, initiated by the socialist leadership, and has ended, as the Communists warned, in imperialist war, supported by M. Blum and his friends, has completed its circle. The great slogans of the French Revolution, celebrated but a few months ago, have been blotted out from the tricolour with the blotting-out of the red flag. But the red flag of the French working class and its Communist Party will rise again. And then, woe to the Two Hundred Families and their lackeys of the socialist party who have betrayed France.

For this situation the Labour Movement in this country must bear its share of responsibility. When the Chamberlain Government and the City of London were intriguing with French reaction against the French Popular Front, the leaders of the British Labour Party and the T.U.C. did nothing to help the popular forces in France. But now that the Popular Front has been broken and, as we have shown, the Communist Party suppressed with the help of the reactionary elements in the French Socialist Party and C.G.T., now that imperialist war has broken out, an Anglo-French trade union co-ordination committee—to help the bourgeoisie pursue the war—has been established without any hesitation. Indeed, the anti-communist, anti-unity policy of Citrine, Bevin, Attlee, Greenwood and Dalton has been one of the most effective weapons ever provided for Anglo-French reaction. The lesson will not be lost on either the British or the French working-class movement.

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We must once again return to the question of the difficulties of the present situation for publications like the LABOUR MONTHLY. *Difficulties of distribution are among these. A considerable part of our circulation has always been overseas, and war-time restrictions on despatch to certain countries threaten to cut off some of this circulation. Rising costs are also likely to make our task more difficult, and this will almost certainly increase as the war goes on.*

We believe, as we have stressed before, that the LABOUR MONTHLY *has a definite and important rôle to play in the present conditions, and we are confirmed in this belief by the large demand for recent issues. More people are turning to us for an explanation of what is happening. In order to satisfy them we need more guarantees and donations. We ask all our readers if possible to guarantee to send a monthly sum towards filling the gap between our costs and our receipts. If this cannot be done, we urge them to send a donation.*

Address them to :

THE MANAGER, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

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DOCUMENTS

British Communists on the War

A MANIFESTO on the war in the following terms was adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain on October 7 (cross-headings have been inserted) :—

In the coming days fateful decisions will be taken which will determine the issue of life or death for millions. The anger of the people is rising against the reactionary statesmen, the Chamberlains, Simons and Hoares, who involved us in this war by the help they gave to Fascism and by their refusal of a peace front with the Socialist Soviet Union.

The anger of the people is rising against the reactionaries and profiteers, who are using this war to fill their pockets and plunder the people.

The anger of the people is rising against the enemies of democracy, who now parade as champions of democracy against Fascism and clamour for the continuance of the war for their reactionary aims.

The Communist Party, which has always stood in the forefront of the struggle for peace and against Fascism, declares :—

The continuance of this war is not in the interests of the people of Britain, France or Germany.

End this war before it has brought death and destruction upon millions and millions of people, before the flower of our youth is slaughtered.

TRUTH ABOUT WAR

The truth about this war must be told. This war is not a war for democracy against Fascism. It is not a war for the liberties of small nations. It is not a war for the defence of peace against aggression. These phrases on the lips of the enemies of democracy, the Chamberlains and the Churchills, the Daladiers and Bonnets, the oppressors of the colonial peoples, are hypocrisy and deception of the people.

The British and French ruling class are seeking to use the anti-Fascist sentiments of the people for their own imperialist aims. By their deeds they have shown that they do not stand for democracy against Fascism. If they did, they would have stood by democracy in Spain and Czechoslovakia. If they did, the British ruling class would have granted the demand of India for democracy.

By their deeds the British and French ruling class have shown that they do not stand for the defence of peace against aggression. If they did they would have agreed to the peace front, which would have prevented this war.

The responsibility for the present imperialist war lies equally on all the warring Powers.

This war is a fight between imperialist powers over profits, colonies and world domination. This war will bring only great suffering and boundless misery to millions of working-class homes.

CHAMBERLAIN HYPOCRISY

It is a piece of colossal humbug and hypocrisy of Chamberlain to pose as the man who will "overthrow Hitlerism." Chamberlain and the British reactionaries helped to create Hitler Fascism.

So long as they hoped that Hitler's aggression would be directed against the Soviet Union, and against democracy and Socialism, they helped Hitler. They financed Hitler. They armed Hitler. They assisted him to strangle the small nations. They cleared the path for his aggression.

There is nothing the British and French ruling class would fear more than the defeat of reaction in Germany. They fear the triumph of the German people. When they speak of the "overthrow of Hitlerism," they mean the setting up of some other kind of reactionary government which will be their servant and carry out their anti-Soviet aims.

The British people will not allow themselves to be used as the tool of Chamberlain's reactionary aims. The struggle of the British people against the Chamberlains and Churchills is the best help to the struggle of the Germans against Hitler.

"RESTORATION" OF POLAND

When Chamberlain speaks of continuing the war for the purpose of the "restoration of Poland," he means the re-establishment of the semi-Fascist régime of Colonel Beck and General Sikorski, of the landlords and militarists, to oppress the Polish workers and peasants and the national minorities. Whilst the British and French workers have deep fraternal sympathy for all the sections of the Polish people now suffering under the jack-boot of the

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brutal Nazi invaders they will not allow themselves to be used as the instruments of Chamberlain's and Daladier's reactionary aims.

The British workers will condemn the despicable action of Chamberlain in giving public guarantees to Poland which he had no intention of fulfilling.

Chamberlain hoped that an easy Nazi victory in Poland would lead to Germany and the Soviet Union embroiling themselves in war. Instead the Red Army marched and Soviet power advanced. All this was accomplished without conflict between Germany and Russia. Hitler had no other choice but to agree.

The Soviet Union, which has brought peace and liberation to the peoples of Western Byelo-Russia and Western Ukraine, has thereby strengthened the conditions for the future liberation of the workers and peasants of Western Poland.

The British and French workers will never be parties in helping Chamberlain and Sikorski to shackle anew the semi-Fascist régime of the Polish landlords and militarists on the Polish people.

Soviet Union and Peace

Only the Socialist State, the Soviet Union, in this war crisis has taken action on behalf of the peoples and of peace. The Soviet Union has kept the 170 millions of its population out of this imperialist war. The Soviet Union has worked for peace in Eastern Europe and is now consolidating that peace by its strength and initiative.

The Soviet Union is now exerting its influence to promote peace in Western Europe. The conclusion of peace under these conditions is in the interests of all the peoples of Europe.

The Soviet Union is leading the world fight for peace.

Let a peace conference of the Powers be called immediately.

Nazi aggression has been checked and limited by the power of the Soviet Union and to-day the Nazi leader is suing for peace. It is the ruling class of Britain and France who demand the continuation of the war. The workers of the world need peace and the opportunity is now before them to stop the bloodshed and to clear the way for the advance of the peoples.

If the workers of Britain, if all democrats fight the Chamberlains and Churchills and elect a new Government which will carry on peace negotiations in the interests of the people and in co-operation with the Soviet Union, it will be possible to lay the basis for a peace that will bind the warmongers of all countries and strengthen democracy everywhere.

The people must take a hand. The immediate issue is the cessation of hostilities and the calling of a peace conference. Stop the war! The people must enforce the terms of a lasting peace.

Blows Against People

The millionaire rulers of Britain and France are using this war to deliver heavy blows against their own peoples.

In France they have suppressed the French Communist Party, the majority party of the French working class and the leader of the fight through all these years for democracy and against Fascism. In this country the employers have launched a sweeping attack on the workers' standards and conditions.

Chamberlain's war budget means the robbery of the masses in the interests of the profiteers. Rising prices are accompanied by soaring profits. Wages have been cut in many industries and nowhere keep pace with the steep rise in food prices. Hours and overtime have been heavily increased ; mass dismissals are taking place. Laws attacking democratic rights have been hurried through Parliament.

All this has happened in the course of the first month of the war, and if not resisted now the capitalists will go to new lengths in order to further enrich themselves at the expense of the workers and their families, and to strengthen still more their dictatorial powers over the lives of the people. The workers must organise resistance to this combined attack of the employers and the Government.

The leaders of the Labour Party and Trade Union movement have sided fully with the Government of Chamberlain and Churchill and are attempting to get the whole working-class movement to support their imperialist war aims. This policy, if not challenged, will disorganise the Labour movement and render it defenceless in the face of the attacks of the employers and the Government and will hand over enormous numbers of young people to become cannon fodder in an unjust war.

The workers must offer the greatest resistance to these attacks. Success will come if in the factories and in the localities unity in action of all sections of the working-class movement is brought about.

Communists' Call

The Communist Party, which has always striven to bring about the unity of the working-class forces,

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declares that the British workers have already paid a heavy penalty for the absence of unity. Let it never be forgotten that this unity was prevented by those very leaders who have now united themselves with the Chamberlains and Churchills. The Communist Party will direct its full energies to the encouragement and organisation of united action for the demands of the workers.

The Communist Party calls upon the members of the Labour Party, active trade unionists and shop stewards, and all those genuinely prepared to fight now for peace and the interests of the people against the reactionary Chamberlain Government to join with it in a great effort to bring about a renewal of the independence and militant struggle of the working-class movement.

The Communist Party calls upon the workers to unite their ranks and to lead the people of Britain forward in the fight for the following demands :

IMMEDIATE MEASURES AGAINST THE PROFITEERS TO BRING DOWN PRICES.

FOR IMMEDIATE INCREASES IN WAGES, PENSIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TO MEET THE RISE IN COST OF LIVING.

FOR THE RESTRICTION OF HOURS AND OVERTIME IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING TRADE UNION AGREEMENTS.

STOP THE MASS DISMISSALS.

HANDS OFF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

FOR THE IMMEDIATE GRANTING OF INDIA'S CLAIM TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE EXTENSION OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO ALL COLONIAL PEOPLES.

DOWN WITH THE CHAMBERLAIN GOVERNMENT.

FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL CARRY OUT THESE DEMANDS, BEGIN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE ARMAMENT KINGS AND PLUNDERING MILLIONAIRES.

BANISH THE SPECTRE OF WAR AND OPEN THE ROAD TOWARDS A NEW, FREE SOCIALIST LIFE.

"No Hope in Chamberlain's Bayonets"

The following excerpts are taken from a recent declaration of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany :—

In contrast with other tendencies within the German opposition the C.P.G. has always maintained that the deliverance of our people from the Fascist dictatorship does not come from outside (war), but that it will come as the result of the struggle of the masses of the people for the overthrow of the Fascist dictatorship. Therefore the Communists have been for years concentrating all their forces upon the development of the mass struggle against Hitler's war policy and have released a strong movement for peace among the German people.

In close touch with the masses and ever at the head of the movements against the Hitler régime, our party has tried by every possible means to unite the divided opposition and, by doing this, to multiply their strength. . . . . Unfortunately the efforts to arrive, with the emigrated leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, at a common policy for the unified mobilisation of the masses of the people have had but little success. . . . . Already in June of this year our C.C. found itself obliged to state, among other things, in its "Thesis Concerning the Situation" :

"*The rejection of the united front with the Communists (by the Social-Democratic Executive Committee) cannot only be explained by stupidity and old age. At bottom, this rejection hides the political plan of preventing, in common with reactionary forces within Germany and with reactionary outside forces, a true German popular revolution and of repeating* 1918 . . . .

"*Behind the strict rejection, on the part of the Social-Democratic Executive Committee, of the united front with the Communists, is hidden the political plan of to-morrow : of playing, in co-operation with the generals, with bourgeois circles, with the help of foreign bayonets, as fatal a rôle directed against the future German people's revolution as Ebert and Noske played in* 1918 *against the German working class and the German revolution.*"

The language they speak in the *Neue Vorwärts* of September 2 is the language of the *Vorwärts* of 1919, the language of Noske's followers, of the fawning lickspittles of the German bourgeoisie and the assassins of their own people.

Their policy of to-day is the continuation of the policy which in January, 1933, rejected the offers of a united front made by the Communists and thus helped the Fascists to come to power ; it is the continuation of the policy embodied in that notorious speech which Wels made in the Reichstag in May, 1933, in which he did not oppose by a single word the

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annulment of the Communist deputies' mandates in the Reichstag, but in which he expressed his approval of Hitler's foreign policy, of a foreign policy which was doomed to lead to war. . . . .

At the time of the outbreak of this war, which can only be terminated by the power of the masses of the people of our country and by the solidarity of the international labour movement and which must lead, together with the overthrow of Hitler, also to the destruction and the extermination of the imperialist warmongers—at such a moment the Stampfers and Hilferdings and Co. proclaim their alliance with the reaction of England and France and with the German bourgeoisie for the repression of the German popular revolution. This makes final the separation between the former Executive Committee of the Social-Democratic Party and the anti-fascist opposition in Germany. . . . .

To the Social-Democrats and Communists in Germany this situation dictates the necessary course—based on the experiences made during the fight for the prevention of war and on the successful co-operation of the Hitler opponents—of strengthening the unity among themselves, of extending it and of making, under the difficult war conditions, all the preparations of the achievement of the people's revolution. They found their hopes neither on Chamberlain's and Daladier's bayonets nor on a " liberal wing " of the German bourgeoisie but solely on the united power of our people, on the solidarity and the struggle of the international working class, and on the help of the strong and great Soviet Union.

By their rejection of all offers of a united front with the Comintern and the C.P.G., by their support and toleration of the non-intervention and Munich policies, the reactionary leaders of the 2nd International, of the International Federation of Trades Unions and of the Executive Committee of the Social-Democratic Party have sabotaged the indefatigable efforts of the Soviet Union to erect an effective peace front against the aggressor and have thereby made possible Hitler's aggression.

The C.P.G. calls upon all anti-fascists in Germany and in exile to work, now more than ever, in the sense of the unification of the German Labour movement and the German opposition ; to fight without mercy the enemies of unity and the Trotskyists, and to mobilise all forces for the overthrow of Hitler. . . . .

We are convinced that the coming revolutionary democracy in Germany will not be a repetition of Weimar, nor will it be a democracy under the heel of British imperialism. For it will make short shrift of the Besteiros, Casados and Noskes and Co.

We are convinced that out of the collaboration of Communists and Social Democrats at the war front as well as on the home front ; out of the comradeship of soldiers and workers ; out of the work, which means so many sacrifices, for the preparation and the achievement of the people's revolution ; in one word, that out of the united struggle of the working class will grow the revolutionary unified party which will be able to lead the whole German people.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Austria a Nation

Die nationale Frage und Osterreichs Kampf um seine Unabhängigkeit : Ein Sammelband. Vorwort von Johann Koplenig. [*The National Question and Austria's Fight for Independence.* A symposium with an introduction by Johann Koplenig.] Editions Prométhée, Paris. 1s. 6d.

" POISONOUS NATIONALIST PROPAGANDA was and still is one of the most important ideological weapons of Fascism, if not the most important." So states the leader of the Communist Party of Austria, Comrade Koplenig, in his introduction to this recently published book. Austria was the first country at which Nazi imperialism aimed ; upon Austria were concentrated for five years the main aggressive designs of the Third Reich ; over Austria there raged for years a storm of Fascist propaganda ; Austria became the first country which attempted to offer opposition to the Nazi lust for conquest ; Austria finally was the first territorial victory of the Third Reich.

The Austrian working class and its leading party, the Communist Party of Austria, have acquired immense experience in the defence against threatened annexation and subsequently in the development of the struggle for freedom against Nazi foreign domination. The Austrian working class in its fight against Nazism and Fascist expansion was confronted as its first concrete task with the question of wresting from Fascist imperialism the weapon of nationalist propaganda and giving a Marxist answer to the national question. It is to the lasting credit of the Party that it recognised and analysed the nature of the struggle for freedom in Austria and its driving force as a national struggle, that it ended the " limitless confusion in everything that concerned the conception of nation and race, both German and Austrian," and finally that, by the application of Marxism-Leninism, which is " not a dogma, but a guide to action," it was in a position to " forge weapons for the fight against Nazi foreign domination in Austria."

The Austrian question, however, is only a part of the general struggle against Fascist imperialism and the lying propaganda which it uses to cover its naked brutality. To-day a knowledge of the general conditions of the struggle of the Austrian people (and the peoples of Czechoslovakia) for the storming of the Greater German fascist prison-house of peoples, for free national self-determination and national liberation, is a necessity for every genuine anti-fascist in every country. This is all the more true since the Austrian people has understood Fascist propaganda, which aims at deceiving large sections of Western European opinion with its hypocritical slogans and lies about " Pan-Germanism " and " Greater Germany," about the " unity of all Germans " and their " liberation." It aims at hiding the brutality of annexation behind Pan-Germanic labels, presenting foreign domination and annexation as a natural and progressive necessity, while the struggle against them is described as contrary to nature. In this lies the international significance of the theoretical achievements which are set out in this volume, that they acquaint all anti-fascists with the Marxist answer to the national question and thus provide a weapon for international defence against the Fascist lies which accompany Nazi aggression.

Is Austria a part of the German nation or a separate nation ? That was, and still remains, the fundamental question with which the book, a collection of the most important articles and resolutions of the Austrian Communist

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Party from 1936 to August, 1938, concerns itself. In answering this question it makes an end of all previous ambiguity, and by the application of Marxism-Leninism, particularly of the famous definition by Stalin of the idea of a nation, it comes to the unequivocal conclusion that " Pan-Germanism " is an invention.

> A united German nation, which also included the German people in Austria, has never existed in history. When after 1866 the various peoples of German stock were joined to form a united German nation, or more corectly, when in 1871 by the formation of the German Empire the conditions were at last created for the fusing together into a united German nation of these various peoples, the German people in Austria, by virtue of historical circumstances, remained outside this new community, or were once and for all squeezed out of it.

The development of nations was accomplished everywhere in the process of the building up and rise of capitalism. But " in this whole period, which is decisive for the coming together of men to form a nation, the economic, political, cultural and therefore also the national development of the Austrians was carried out under different conditions and in a different direction from that of the German nation." The Austrians, therefore, do not form a part of the German nation, but the " Austrian people is an *independent* people ; it has *its own* culture, *its own* history and, above all, the proud fighting tradition of its working class." The struggle, which the Austrian people is carrying on for its independence and self-determination, therefore, takes on the character of a national struggle for freedom, in which for the first time " *the Austrians have become fully conscious of their existence as a nation.*"

What must be the attitude of the working class to this struggle ? Should the proletariat " boycott " the national question—as being " bourgeois "—as the so-called " revolutionary Socialists " do in Austria to-day ? The task of the revolutionary proletariat and its Communist Party can only be to put itself at the head of the people in this fight. For if even before the annexation " the aggressive imperialist policy of Hitler-Fascism directed the struggle of the Austrian people for the independence of their country along the lines of a *progressive* national struggle for freedom," which corresponded to the interests of the progress of mankind, then to-day, under foreign domination, the struggle against German Fascism in Austria " takes on even more than before the character of a *revolutionary-democratic* national struggle for freedom." To-day when Fascism has already subjugated a number of European peoples and threatens the national existence of others, the defence of these peoples and their struggle for freedom has, " *in accordance with its inherent nature, become objectively a part of the universal struggle against Fascism.*" The movement for independence in Austria is " a deciding element in preparing the liberation of Austria and the rest of the Reich, in bringing it about and in hastening it."

Who else but the working class can and must be the leader in this struggle ? If in the period of rising capitalism it was the young bourgeoisie which stood at the head of the nation, now when a part of the bourgeoisie is betraying the general interests of the nation for the sake of its class interests, only the working class is in a position to take the lead in the struggle for the interests of the nation as a whole. The proletariat to-day has the task of leading the peoples in the struggle for their right of national self-determination and for the breaking up of the Greater German sphere of Fascist power. In this the proletariat is fulfilling its international task.

It is, then, nothing but a parody of internationalism for some Socialists to justify by reference to it their looking upon the annexation of peoples by Fascism as a " historical advance " and discrediting the peoples' national struggle as " reactionary." It is clear that all such theories have nothing to

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do with Marxism and proletarian internationalism, but only support the poison of Fascist propaganda.

> It is impossible to oppose the struggle for freedom, democracy and socialism to the national struggle of a people for freedom. *The national struggle for autonomy and independence—as a preliminary condition to the exercise of the right of self-determination—is a decisive part of the struggle for social and political liberation. It is an important part of the revolutionary, socialist struggle, of the struggle for universal democracy, to which it is subordinated.*

This book shows how the Communist Party of Austria applied Marxist-Leninist theory in particular to answering the national question in Austria and to the clarification of the tasks of the Austrian proletariat in the national question. Over and above that it is a book of general international significance, an especially valuable creative contribution to the living development of Marxism, in that it presents the national question under modern conditions in its general aspects and gives a determined answer. For "the victory of Fascism in Germany, its efforts for a redivision of Europe have again given the national question *a new significance for all European peoples and presented it in a new light.*"

The Communist Party of Austria in giving the concrete solution of the national question in Austria has given to all anti-fascists in other countries an example of the method of studying the national question. In particular, the book helps in "neutralising the nationalistic, pan-German poison," which is the main propaganda weapon of Nazi imperialism. It is therefore a text-book of theory and practice of the national struggle for liberation and of the national question in the present epoch and should be thoroughly studied by every anti-fascist.

ANDREAS HOFER.

Vital Statistics

The Condition of the Workers in Great Britain, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1932-38, by Jürgen Kuczynski. (Gollancz. 1s. 6d.).

IT IS OF the greatest political importance that the working-class movement should understand absolutely clearly the difference between Fascist countries and other capitalist countries, and the immense difference between capitalist countries and the socialist U.S.S.R. Kuczynski's book scientifically exposes the cant sayings that "Fascism and Communism are fundamentally the same thing," and "It makes no difference to the workers whether Fascism or capitalist democracy rules," which have been peddled in the movement, by the *Daily Herald* and the *New Leader* respectively, during past weeks. The author sets out to show statistically (using the official statistics) how the workers have fared under fascism, capitalist democracy and socialism.

The book is particularly valuable because it deals with the *changes in conditions* in the past seven years. It is thus able to compare not merely the level of wages, social services, etc., in the three countries at any given moment, but the direction in which these conditions are moving and therefore the real effect of the régime on the workers. Here it is in sharp contrast to the method adopted by the bourgeois economist, Colin Clark, in his recent book, *Critique of Russian Statistics*, where he exercises all his ingenuity to make a direct comparison of the national income for one year (1934) between Russia and England (incidentally quite an unreal comparison) but makes no attempt to show the process of rapid improvement in the U.S.S.R., which has already made his comparisons out of date. A similar static approach was the basis for much of the reactionary nonsense in Citrine's book *I Search for Truth in Russia.*

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The first part of the book compares conditions in Britain and in Germany. The repressive measures of fascism against the trade union movement are fairly common knowledge. What is less familiar is the effect of this repression on working conditions, i.e., the attack on all the workers as such, not merely on those who are politically active.

The wage statistics are first examined as the most obvious source, and it is shown that in each separate industry in Germany real wages in 1938 were actually below the crisis level of 1932, whereas in Britain they were appreciably higher. The consumption standard in Germany is shown to be about half the officially recognised minimum diet in most parts of Germany.

The effects of Fascism on the workers cannot, however, be fully shown from the wage figures alone, which are inadequate even when allowance is made for the special inaccuracy and bias of the Nazi figures. The real measure of oppression is given when along with low wages we consider the drastic speed-up and the greatly lengthened working-day in Germany, with their disastrous effects on health. Both in England and Germany the five years 1932-1937 saw a great increase in profits and productivity without a corresponding increase in wages. But this process was far more striking in Germany as a result of greater exploitation.

The comparison of conditions in Britain and Germany with those in the U.S.S.R., however, reveals much more striking contrasts. While consumption of important foods has risen little (under 20 per cent.) even in Britain, since 1932, and for many (e.g., meat) has declined in Germany, in the U.S.S.R. the consumption of food by each worker increased enormously; between 1932 and 1936 the consumption of meat, dairy produce and fruit almost doubled. For clothing the figures are equally striking, while expenditure on social insurance, which has changed little in the capitalist countries, has shot up in the Soviet Union. Kuczynski makes no attempt here to gloss over the many deficiencies, especially in housing, which workers still put up with in the Soviet Union, or the fact that certain workers in Britain, and a few even in Germany, enjoy a standard above that of the Soviet worker. On the other hand he shows that even to-day no Soviet worker is so badly off as the lowest paid workers even in Britain.

The author's conclusion is :—

> Labour conditions in Germany have deteriorated even below the crisis level of 1932.
>
> Labour conditions in Britain have slightly improved since 1932.
>
> Labour conditions in the Soviet Union improved moderately between 1932 and 1934. Between 1934 and 1938 an improvement has taken place which has no parallel in the history of Labour.

Furthermore, " if present trends continue, every year now will widen the gap between conditions in the Soviet Union and capitalist Great Britain."

This book is a weapon which we have needed for a long time. It was not forthcoming earlier because of the formidable difficulties involved in making the statistics of the three countries comparable at all. It is, as the author says, " a first exploration of new territory "; and in general the analysis and necessary correction of the bias, especially marked in the Nazi figures, is done with unexceptionable care and ingenuity. Very occasionally this ingenuity leads the author to try to prove more than his material appears to justify. For example, it seems doubtful whether a slight increase in the value of health prescriptions per person in Britain since 1932 really indicates a decline in the standard of health, as Kuczynski " safely assumes " (p. 49). It may equally well indicate a less stringent administration after the " economy " drive of 1931. Such defects are indeed minor ones. They are worth pointing out because they may give a handle to bourgeois critics who

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wish to discredit the main statistical argument, which is, on the figures given, unanswerable. It is true that such "over-ingenuity" is much more often manifest in the work of bourgeois statisticians (such as Colin Clark in the work referred to above). But the Marxist analysis has no need for it.

MARGOT HEINEMANN.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Town That Was Murdered. Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 287 pp.

I Went to the Soviet Arctic. Ruth Gruber. (Gollancz.) 10s. 6d. 380 pp.

The Victorian Age. Professor R. B. Mowat. (Harrap.) 7s. 6d. 251 pp.

I Haven't Unpacked. William Holt. (Harrap.) 8s. 6d. 288 pp.

More Thoughts and Talks. Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P. (Longmans.) 7s. 6d. 300 pp.

A Plan for Democratic Britain. G. D. H. Cole. (Odhams.) 3s. 6d. 255 pp.

Ghandism. P. Spratt. (Huxley Press, Madras.) Rs. 2/8. 516 pp.

India's Teeming Millions. Gyan Chand. (Allen and Unwin.) 12s. 6d. 374 pp.

Mohammed and Charlemagne. Henri Pirenne. (Allen and Unwin.) 10s. 6d. 293 pp.

Nazi Germany Can't Win. Wilhelm Necker. (Lindsay Drummond.) 10s. 6d. 364 pp.

Science and Politics in the Ancient World. Benjamin Farrington. (Allen and Unwin.) 10s. 6d. 243 pp.

Science and Everyday Life. J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 5s. 284 pp.

On the History of the Bolshevik Organisations in Transcaucasia. L. Beria. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 1s. 206 pp.

No Compromise. Melvin Rader. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 384 pp.

Munich: Before and After. Dr. Hubert Ripka. (Gollancz.) 15s. 523 pp.

One Hundred Years Ago. T. Islwyn Nicholas. (Gwasg y Seren Goch, Aberystwyth.) 6d. 52 pp.

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